

UAE amnesty for illegals expires; hundreds remain

DUBAI (AFP) — An amnesty giving illegal immigrants time to leave the United Arab Emirates or get proper documentation expired Thursday, with hundreds of foreigners still illegally here.

After a mass exodus of tens of thousands of Asians by air and by sea, the last illegal aliens were waiting for the last minute to complete the formalities that would permit them to remain in the country without facing fines or prison sentences.

In Dubai, around 100 illegal workers still had not obtained the proper papers on the last day of the amnesty, which initially expired September 30 but was extended for another month.

The department of work permits, treated to control job changes for foreigners, closed its doors at midday Thursday even though the group of 100 foreigners was still waiting outside.

In the UAE, a foreigner is automatically illegal if he changes jobs without permission from the employer who got him or her his entry permit.

"There's nothing to do but go back to India," said P.V. Abdul Latif, a trade representative who was unable to complete the formalities for his job change in time because of his former employer. "He delayed my papers to punish me for quitting," the Indian said.

Officials quoted Thursday in the press said they expected hundreds of people to be unable to complete the formalities for work permit transfers before the deadline.

At the same time, hundreds of illegal workers who had tried to become

legal — mainly Afghans, Bangladeshis, Indians and Pakistanis — left the UAE on Thursday with safe-conduct passes allowing them to go without being arrested.

"I came with a visitor's visa," Suhail Yemia, a Pakistani who was working here in construction and who had tried to get a legal permit, said.

"I hope that my company will bring me back legally," he added, pulling a cart piled high with clothes, a radio-cassette player and small television.

An air India said its extra flights to the UAE would end once the amnesty had expired.

An air India official said the rush for flights had slowed in October after it added 58 extra flights the previous month to accommodate the massive numbers of illegals departing.

According to recent official statistics, published Oct. 27, more than 160,000 illegal migrants — mostly from India and other Asian countries — had left the UAE under the amnesty.

UAE officials said they expected the total number of people departing to exceed 200,000, or nine percent of the country's population, by the time the amnesty expired.

According to embassy estimates, less than 20 percent of the 2.23 million UAE residents are citizens. Most of the foreigners are Indians.

Under the new immigration law, illegal aliens are subject to prison terms of up to three years and fines of up to 30,000 dirhams (\$8,200), while those who help bring them into the country risk sentences of up to 15 years in prison.

Turkey holds 7 for suicide bombing

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish police on Friday caught seven rebel Kurds responsible for a suicide bomb attack on a crack police force headquarters that killed four people in the southern town of Adana.

A 17-year-old woman guerrilla, dressed to look pregnant, blew up herself and four others in the attack a week ago — the second of three such attacks by the rebel Kurdish Labour Party (PKK).

Interior Minister Mehmet Agar said one of the detained men — a 38-year-old codenamed "Isa", whom he identified as Bayram Yoruk — had directly planned the attack and the other six had helped him.

"This man brought the terrorist girl to the scene of the incident at around 3 p.m. But the girl took fright and changed her mind about carrying out the attack," Anatolian news agency quoted Mr. Agar as saying.

"He took the girl out of town and threatened her at gunpoint before taking her back some two hours later. And then the sad event took place," Mr. Agar said.

More than 20,000 people have died in the PKK's 12-year-old battle for self-rule in the mainly Kurdish southeast, but the suicide bombings only started this year.

The first attack came in July, after PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan warned of a wave of suicide bombings on the model of strikes by Palestinian group Hamas. The latest was on Tuesday, the national holiday celebrating the founding of the Turkish republic in 1923.

Taleban say some curbs on women to be eased

KABUL (AP) — A Taleban leader said Friday restrictions on women that have prompted international condemnation could be lifted once the Islamic group has consolidated its hold over the Afghan capital.

"When there is security in Kabul, girls' schools can open," said Galaluddin Sheenwari, the Taleban government's deputy minister of religious instruction and one of the most senior Taleban mullahs.

Mr. Sheenwari also said it was "possible" all women would one day be allowed to work. Government, the United Nations and other groups have criticised Kabul's new rulers for ordering girls to stop going to school and women to stop working, restrictions the Taleban insist preserve female modesty. Already, some aid groups have been allowed to rehire women.

Despite Mr. Sheenwari's pledges, Taleban conduct elsewhere in Afghanistan raises questions about the group's flexibility when it comes to the role of women.

The Taleban have been in uncontested control of Kandahar, about 350 kilometres



A family carries its belongings as they leave the Afghan capital, fleeing fighting between the ruling Taleban and an alliance of opposition groups (Reuters photo)

south of Kabul, for two years, and girls there are only allowed to go to school between the ages of 4 and 8, and then only to receive enough instruction to allow them to study the Koran. All schooling for girls in Herat, some 500 kilometres west of Kabul and capital of a province of the same name, has been

halted since the Taleban took over that provincial capital a year ago.

The Taleban army seized the capital Sept. 27 in a campaign to impose a strict Islamic regime. For the past week, Taleban forces and their opponents, dug in just north of the city, have exchanged bombs, shells and artillery fire.

Afghanistan has been beset by factional fighting since 1992, when rebel forces splintered after ousting the Soviet-backed government.

The anti-Taleban alliance is demanding the Taleban withdraw from Kabul before agreeing to a ceasefire. The Taleban rulers want a ceasefire first.

Pentagon officials were warned of 'bombshell' disclosures about Gulf war, 1995 memo says

WASHINGTON (AFP) — As Pentagon officials declassified Gulf war documents last year, they were warned to flag any embarrassing "bombshell" reports related to chemical or biological agents, according to a memorandum made public Thursday.

The memo, dated Nov. 3, 1995, noted the concerns of senior Pentagon officials that the documents may contain "potential sensitive" information that could embarrass the government.

Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon defended the memo as a reasonable attempt to marshal information to explain the documents, and not to keep them from being declassified. "The Pentagon has nothing to hide," he said. "I think it is completely unfair to accuse U.S. of sitting on information."

About 1,000 documents were declassified last year and put on a Pentagon Internet site for veterans, and then removed in February after the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) complained that they were too revealing of its sources and methods.

Since then 600 documents have been put back on the Internet site, called GulfLink, but the remaining 400 documents have become the source of a widening controversy that has undermined the Pentagon's credibility.

Two former CIA analysts, accusing the CIA and the Pentagon of a cover up, this week insisted that the documents point to as many as 60 incidents

of possible releases of chemical agents near U.S. troops.

A book on the findings by Patrick Eddington, the CIA analyst who with his wife Robin made the allegations of a cover-up in an interview with the New York Times, is to be published soon by Insignia USA, a Washington D.C. publisher.

Insignia USA also was planning to release on its own Internet site some of the 266 documents from the batch retrieved by the Pentagon.

Thursday, it put on its Internet site the Nov. 3 memo from Paul Wallner, the staff director of the Pentagon's senior level oversight panel on Gulf war illnesses.

It instructed declassifiers to flag and forward documents to the Gulf investigation team prior to their release.

"The purpose of this procedure is not to stop any declassified or unclassified documents from going on GulfLink, but to allow the investigation team time to begin the preparation of a response on particular 'bombshell' reports," the memo said.

Documents to be flagged, the memo said: "Any that could generate unusual public or media attention;

"All documents which seem to confirm the use of detection nuclear, chemical, or biological agents;

"Documents which make gross/stunning assertions, i.e., pilot's report that he saw a 'giant cloud of anthrax gas.'"

"Documents containing releasable information which could embarrass the government or DoD (Department of Defense). Statements such as 'we are not to bring this up to the press' fit in this category."

"Documents which shed light on issues which have high levels of media interest, such as the Nov. 1995 life article on birth defects among Gulf war veterans' children."

Bacon said the documents that were later pulled from the Internet were not chosen because they fit those criteria.

He would not speculate on what action the Pentagon might take against Insignia USA, or any other group or individual that releases the documents that had been withdrawn from GulfLink.

The situation was "tricky," he said, because GulfLink was consulted by the public 33,000 times when the documents were on the Internet and all the documents had been downloaded 18 times.

In defending the government against charges of a cover-up, Mr. Bacon said the Eddingtons had "reached a different conclusion from almost all the other analysts in this case."

"To a certain extent their conclusions are illogical. If there was that much exposure during the war, you would expect to see some sort of acute response from soldiers on the ground at the time. We didn't see that," Mr. Bacon said.

10 people killed in Somalia fighting

MOGADISHU (R) — Ten people were killed and 16 injured in overnight fighting between militia loyal to rival faction leaders Ali Hassan Osman Ato and Aidede Aidede in southern Somalia, militia leaders said on Friday.

They said Aidede militia attacked a militia base occupied by Ato fighters in magambo, Lower Juba region, 450 kilometres southeast of Mogadishu, and seized the base. They added that Ato's men were now fighting to recapture it.

Mahmoud Mohammad, commander of Mr. Aidede's militia in the capital Mogadishu, said his men also seized two "technical" army wagons from Ato's

militiamen. He gave no further details on the fighting.

The fighting this week was the bloodiest flare up since Somali nationwide — including Ato and Aidede — agreed in Nairobi two weeks ago to end hostilities, remove roadblocks and pledged a continuation of dialogue for a peace process. The peace deal was brokered by Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi.

Ahmad Ali, a radio operator based in Magambo, said fighters were using heavy and small arms and fighting was continuing. He said 30 families loyal to Ato had been forced out of the Magambo area. The wounded were taken to the Kismayu hospital.

This week has seen dozens of deaths in Mogadishu alone.

On Wednesday, 26 people were killed and 48 wounded when Ato forces attacked and captured an airstrip from Aidede fighters.

Since last month supporters of Mr. Aidede have killed more than 10 people who backed Ato, a rival south Mogadishu faction leader whose forces are widely blamed for killing Mohammed Farah Aidede.

Mr. Aidede, like his father, was elected president of Somalia by supporters and heads a government. But it has not received much international recognition and is rejected by most other leaders.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 The Adventures of Mickey and Donald

14:30 Drama

14:45 Just the Job

15:00 Doc. — La France Aux Mille Villages

15:30 Fete des Bebes

16:00 Sports — Gillette

16:30 Chris Cross

17:00 News Flash

17:30 Futures

17:45 Blue Heelers

18:00 French Programme

19:00 Le Journal

19:15 Magazine — Ziva

19:30 News Headlines

19:35 Comedy — Something Wilder

20:00 Doc. — New Literacy

20:30 Prism

21:10 Lois and Clarke

22:00 News in English

22:25 Final Justice

23:59 Feature Film

PRAYER TIMES

04:30 Fajr

05:48 Sunrise Doha

11:19 Dhuhur

14:23 'Asr

16:50 Maghreb

18:08 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Swidheh, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661656.

Terrace Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Amman International Church Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures are expected to drop with skies partly cloudy.

Scattered showers are expected winds and humidity moderate.

City weather in Jordan. Skies will be partly cloudy to cloudy.

winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Hanan Mansour 750197

Dr. Afif Shukri 898863

Dr. Nidal Al Dahleh 827195

Dr. Sa'id Tawfiq 788285

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdous pharmacy 778336

Al Asena pharmacy 637055

Nairoukh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'anneh 250080

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Rashid Attallah 994424

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department

Min./Max. temp. 10/20

Amman 14/27

Agaba 08/22

Deserts 14/27

Jordan Valley 14/27

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 24, Agaba 28 Humidity

readings: Amman 28 per cent.

Agaba 48 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192 621111

637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussain Medical Centre 813813/2

Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6

Akileh Maternity, J. Amn 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Mahsas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26

Army, Marka 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602340/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09983323

Zarqa National Hospital 09900560

Thn Sina Hospital 09986752

Al Hikam Modern Hospital 09990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital 02755555

Greek Catholic Hospital 0272275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital 021247100

Jordanian delegation discusses U.N. resolution with Baghdad

AMMAN (J.T.) — A visiting delegation which held meetings in Iraq over the past three days described these talks as extremely successful.

These talks dealt with issues related to transportation between Aqaba and various destinations within Iraq.

Director General of the Jordanian Ports Corporation (JPC) Mohammad Dalabih led the delegation and was quoted by the local press Friday as saying that Baghdad has pledged to give priority to the port of Aqaba for transportation for Iraq-bound merchandise.

The Aqaba port is expected to participate in a major increase in the volume of

Iraqi-bound goods effective upon a UN Security Council resolution allowing exchanges of oil for food and medicine.

This resolution permits Iraq to sell \$2 billion worth of its oil over a six-month period on a renewable basis, according to Mr. Dalabih.

The Jordanian port is expected to increase operations once the 1990 sanctions, imposed on Iraq during its occupation of Kuwait, have been completely lifted, he added.

Once the programme begins Iraq will be able to import 2.3 million tonnes of the goods through the port of Aqaba and the Iraqi ports, Mr. Dalabih said,

adding that Iraq used to import an annual 12 million tonnes of goods before the sanctions were imposed.

Mr. Dalabih held talks with Iraqi ministers of transport, trade and industry as well as representatives of economic institutions which, he said, resulted in an agreement on future cooperation and informational exchanges between the Aqaba and Basra ports as well as a series of meetings to be held between the two sides in achieving their goal.

Previous to the sanctions on Iraq as well as during the war between Iran and Iraq, the Jordanian port served as the main line for transportation of goods to Iraq.

Middle East Complex announces vehicle manufacturing plan

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Middle East Complex firm (MEC) Friday announced its 1997 plan to manufacture six and eight-seater vehicles in Jordan under licence from the South Korean Sang Young company, with 90 per cent of the production destined for export.

Usama Khalili who partially owns the Mustafa Darwish Al Khalili group, under whose auspices the MEC falls, told the Jordan Times Friday that his company was currently looking for a 200 dunum plot of

land, possibly proximate to the Queen Alia International Airport to build the factory.

"We are expecting to secure the land within 10 days and then we will begin immediate construction of the factory to be ready for production by June of 1997," Mr. Khalili said.

"We intend to produce Musso and Korando four-wheel drives under licence of the South Korean Sang Young company at the annual initial production rate of 8,000 vehicles, he explained.

He said that only 10 per

cent of the vehicles will be sold in Jordan, mainly as private cars, with the rest to be marketed in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Palestine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Israel as well as the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

"The MEC will be assisted in production of the vehicles by a team of Sang Young experts who will be supervising the assembly lines and maintenance workshops as well," said Mr. Khalili.

He added, "while we will be importing engines and other essential parts from South Korea, we plan to

purchase additional parts like batteries, glass for windows, leather for seats, electric cables, brakes, filters, car paint and other components from the local market."

"Once we start producing cars for the market we will be second only to Egypt in this region in manufacturing small-size vehicles," added Mr. Khalili.

The Jordanian Elba Company is already producing large buses under licence from various European and Asian firms.

Mr. Khalili stated that the MEC will be employing at

least 800 workers for the initial production stages, adding that some will be trained in Korea while the rest will receive training at the local factory in Jordan.

He projected the cost of establishing the factory to be approximately \$30 million but he stated his expectation that the company might sell up to \$60 million worth of vehicles in the first two years after the start of production.

Mr. Khalili added that the MEC hopes to be able to manufacture cars of its own in seven years time.

'New election law should be drafted by experts, academics'

Specialists continue 'healthy debate' of pros, cons of various systems

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Internationally renowned "electoral engineers" have suggested the establishment of "a commission of experts and academics to take over the responsibility of drafting an electoral law" to regulate Jordan's next general elections.

In the second and final day of a seminar described by prominent Egyptian political sociologist Sa'ad Eddin Ibrahim as "a very healthy debate," the guest speakers also stressed on the "time factor."

They suggested that the new electoral law, slated for passage prior to next November's elections, should be ratified "early enough to give the electorate and the candidates time to be trained and educated on the new regulations."

Organised by the Centre for Strategic Studies of the University of Jordan, the seminar, entitled "Electoral Law: A Comparative Analysis," presented an overview of what experts saw as negative and positive aspects of different electoral system possibilities, citing recent world experiences, and providing participants with the opportunity to spark an animated debate over the case of Jordan.

Addressing a high-ranking and actively participating audience of politicians, former ministers and academics, Jorgen Elkitt, from the Department of Political Science of the University of Aarhus, Denmark, said "a commission should be appointed, in order to draft an electoral law soon," adding that "academics and politicians should work hand in hand."

With two other panelists, Professor at the Oslo-based Institute for Social Research Bernt Aardal and expert on constitutional design at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in Stockholm Andrew Reynolds, Prof. Elkitt highlighted the advantages of proportional electoral systems and warned against the "dangers" of majoritarian formulae.

Classifying the electoral systems on a scale ranging from "plurality," "majoritarian," "semi-proportional" and "proportional" systems, (starting from the electoral mechanisms producing parliaments "less representative" of the country's social and political realities), Prof. Elkitt said Jordan's 1989 election law can be classified as a "plurality, multi-member districts system," while Jordan's 1993 one-person, one-vote system can be classified as "semi-proportional."

Though a plurality system is bound to produce "single-party strong governments, exclude extremist parties and maintain a strong MP-constituent link, it also hinders the representation of small parties and women and tends to exclude ethnic minorities," according to Dr. Reynolds.

On the other hand, proportional representation systems, in which the percentage of votes obtained by each party is reflected in the percentage of parliamentary seats, "assure the representation of minorities and make power-sharing, (between business and political parties, for example), more visible," said Dr. Reynolds, who also served as a consultant for the U.N. in many developing countries' recent elections. Recognising the possible disadvantages of proportional



Women cast their votes during the 1993 parliamentary elections (file photo)

representation systems, (such as legislative grid-locks and the rise of extremist parties), the speakers still expressed a propensity to consider such systems more suitable to Jordan's democratic development.

"The disadvantages of a proportional system are much easier to be corrected than the ones entailed by a majoritarian system," Prof. Elkitt said in his concluding remarks, adding that "the allocation of seats in each constituency could be tailored on the country's exigencies and compensatory seats could be added to the system, as it is the case in many countries."

"Jordan's current electoral system is very interesting for scholars, but it will become very dangerous once a cohesive party system will develop," echoed Dr. Reynolds.

Believing that "a cohesive party system will develop," he added that the current one-person, one-vote system "combines the negative aspects of both proportional and majoritarian systems," as it "will erode the parties from within and create tensions from below because of lack of fair representation of all the groups."

Reiterating the need for an "electoral commission" to draft the election law governing the next general elections, Dr. Aardal stressed the need for "popular consensus and a broader debate (on the draft law) among the people as a whole."

The European speakers stressed that "there is no best election system," adding that "a system which functions well and enjoys widespread support in one setting, may be a disaster in another." But while they agreed on the advantages of proportional representation, many of the seminar participants argued against it.

"An electoral system is the result of specific factors which are different in each country," former minister of education and health and now chairman of the Lower House of Parliament Judiciary Committee Abdul Ra'uf Rawabdeh said.

Mr. Rawabdeh added that "in Jordan's case, the possible negative consequences of proportional representation, such as government instability and the rise of extremist parties, could be disastrous."

The debate in the morning session intensified when the issue of ethnic, religious and women quotas was raised: reflecting the divisions in political circles over the controversial quota system, participants, who happened to be Christian, were divided about maintaining the seats reserved to religious minorities, as were women activists over the possible introduction of a women's quota.

"If 50 years ago there was a reason for minority seats, today, keeping the quota system means that all the governments, from 1929 until today, have failed in sparking an

integration process in the society," said sociologist Suleiman Sweiss, a prominent human rights activist.

"In Jordan there is no real discrimination, ethnic or religious. Jordan is an integrated society, and I think the debate should not be exaggerated," declared member of the Upper House and former minister of information and state Ibrahim Izzeddin.

"The quotas were introduced as means to achieve democracy and a fair representation in Parliament of all components of Jordanian society," said Dr. Izzeddin.

As for the proposal of introducing a women's quota, forwarded by some unions and political circles several months ago but never formalised in an official request before Parliament, women's activist Leila Neffah declared that "a women's quota is needed" to achieve gender equality. She said that in other democracies women are provided with chances to represent their constituencies because the electoral systems have built mechanisms to guarantee their access to political involvement.

But another proponent of women's issues did not see the quota as the solution.

Instead, Haifa Bashir, former president of the Jordan Women's Federation, proposed the introduction of a law to encourage political parties to "give women access to Parliament," possibly requiring them to include a certain percentage of women in their candidate lists.

Contributing to the last session of the seminar, moderated by Director of the Centre for Strategic Studies Mustafa Hamarneh, Chairman of the Board at the Cairo-based Ibn Khaldoun Centre for Development Studies Sa'ad Eddin Ibrahim said "concepts like tribalism or quotas should not scare the people."

Dr. Ibrahim, who is also professor of political sociology at the American University in Cairo and Secretary General of the Egyptian Independent Commission for Electoral Review, stressed the need for Arab emerging democracies to combine tradition inherited from the past with modern needs and concepts.

He called on the Arab countries to benefit from their tradition of "civil communities," such as the professional unions which already centuries ago represented the link between the authorities and the people in the decision-making process.

"Like each of us is identified by a first name, which represents his/her personal achievements, and by a family name, which was inherited," in the same way the "young Arab democracies" should unite traditions and social and cultural heritage with modernity's needs.

Pointing to the "march towards democracy" of the Arab World Dr. Ibrahim reminded the participants that as recently as 1983 no Arab country was holding parliamentary elections. Today, he added, only 13 years later, 11 out of the 23 Arab League members have held general elections.

Dr. Ibrahim appealed to his Jordanian colleagues "not to surrender, and keep in mind that the main factor of stability in any country is the satisfaction of the people."

Dutch team to discuss investment opportunities

AMMAN (J.T.) — A visiting delegation from the Dutch Chamber of Commerce will be participating in economic discussions with both governmental representatives as well as those in the private sector from Nov. 1 through the 4th, according to a representative from the Arab German Insurance Company, Mithqal Muqattash.

Mr. Muqattash stated that this delegation will be discussing investment opportunities in Jordan as well as participating in a working dinner tonight to cover the

potential upgrade of the Kingdom's insurance sector from the service to the industrial level "to match or assist government targets and goals (stemming from) economic reform."

Participating in the talks will be the Jordanian Businessmen's Association, the Investment Promotion Organisation, the Amman Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Arab-German Insurance Company, members of the Netherlands Embassy, as well as government officials and representatives of the private sector.

Industrial fair to augment trade relations with Palestine

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Industrial Fair, slated to open Nov. 6, intends to benefit Jordanian-Palestinian trade, according to Palestinian Minister of Trade and Industry Maher Masri as reported in Al Dustour Arabic daily.

Jordanian Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb is expected to open the exhibition in the West Bank city of Ramallah, the report said, adding that the fair will display a wide range of products.

"We count a great deal on intensifying economic and trade exchanges with Jordan. [We believe this to be] for our mutual benefit, especially as we consider the Kingdom our natural path to the Arab World," said Mr. Masri.

He said that a series of preparatory meetings have been held over the last two years and that another larger meeting is expected to be held at the ministerial and specialist



Ali Abul Ragheb

levels following the Middle East and North Africa Economic summit in Cairo this month.

Last September, Mr. Masri had said he would call for a Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli ministerial meeting to discuss amendments of the Palestinian-Israeli trade agreement, which, in its present form, he stated, obstructs trade between the Kingdom and Palestinian self-

rule areas.

Also in September, the commercial attaché at the Israeli embassy in Amman, Shaul Sasson, announced that Israel would implement a twofold increase of current quotas on the list of goods that Palestinians are allowed to import from Jordan without being subjected to Israeli customs.

Officials said the increase includes cement, one of Jordan's first and main exports to the Palestinian territories.

According to Mr. Masri, recent events in the West Bank and Jerusalem prevented the assembly of the Jordanian-Israeli-Palestinian ministerial meeting but he stated his hopes that the meeting would be convened soon.

He said that the meeting is aimed at securing increased Israeli facilities for the transportation of Palestinian and Jordanian goods across the bridges on the River Jordan.

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WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition of works by Zurich-based Jordanian artist Nabil Shehadeh at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh. Also displaying works by Jordanian artist Mohammad Nasrallah and works by contemporary artists, until Nov. 13.

"Timeless Weaving and New Creations — Home Furnishings and Accessories" at the Jordan Crafts Development Centre (Al Aydi), Jabal Annan, Second Circle, until Nov. 10.

Abstract (plastic) art by Sa'ad Haddadin at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Utheina, until Nov. 5.

Dole declares campaign marathon to beat Clinton

WASHINGTON (R) — Republican Bob Dole announced Thursday he would campaign day and night for the last 96 hours of the U.S. presidential race in a herculean effort to prevent the re-election of President Bill Clinton.

Pushing his 73-year-old body to the limit, Sen. Dole vowed to hit the ground in as many as 15 states in a sleepless effort to round up votes which may set new standards for grueling presidential campaign finales.

"The last time I fought round the clock for my country was in 1945 in Italy," Sen. Dole said, recalling his military service during the World War II when he was seriously wounded.

"I will once again fight round-the-clock for America's future. Ninety-six hours of nonstop campaigning. From noon Friday until noon on Nov. 5," which is election day, he said.

"I am determined to make every hour of this decisive election count," he said. "The stakes are that high."

The Dole campaign later released a list of the first 19 sites on what it is billing as a "non-stop victory tour." They include pre-dawn appearances in Detroit, New Jersey and California and a 2:30 a.m. stop in the 24-hour gambling capital of Las Vegas.

But the Dole campaign received a crushing blow from a new poll in California, which said Mr. Clinton had widened his lead from 10 to 18 points in the past two weeks — even as Sen. Dole, in a costly and questionable strategy shift, threw himself into an effort to wrest the state away from Mr. Clinton.

He had decided to roll the dice in California, figuring he could upset Mr. Clinton nationwide by stealing the state's 54 electoral votes, which are one-fifth of the

270 needed to win in the indirect U.S. system.

He poured \$1.5 million a week into television spots and spent seven days in the state. In doing so, Sen. Dole pulled television advertising money out of other crucial states, virtually conceding them to Mr. Clinton.

Nationally, Sen. Dole narrowed Mr. Clinton's lead to 7.7 percentage points in the latest Reuters poll. Reform party candidate Ross Perot's support has been creeping towards the 10 per cent mark.

Sen. Dole campaign spokesman Nelson Warfield said the 96-hour finale would be by bus, plane and other transport and would end in California. Others have made extraordinary last-gasp efforts but few, if any, could match Sen. Dole's plan for non-stop

activity over so long a time and so much territory.

Four years ago, Mr. Clinton campaigned non-stop for 30 hours from Philadelphia to Denver to his home base in Arkansas, but that was strictly by plane.

Mr. Clinton Thursday focused on the west, hoping to win in Arizona, a feat no democratic presidential candidate has managed since Harry Truman in 1948.

In Las Vegas, Mr. Clinton told a large, cheering crowd that he wanted them to "be upbeat about America, optimistic about your future and determined to make the choice that will guarantee that that vision can be made real."

He said there was "a real difference" between him and Sen. Dole on key issues "and I believe it's an honest difference."

"I don't like all this harsh rhetoric and personal attacks and attempts to convince people that your opponent is no good. I don't think there's very much to that," Mr. Clinton said in an indirect but unmistakable reference to Sen. Dole's relentless attacks on his ethics and character.

"I've been working at this for over 20 years now," Mr. Clinton continued. "Most people I've met from both parties, from all points on the political spectrum, have loved our country, have wanted what was best for it, worked hard and were honest — contrary to the image that is often portrayed."

Revealing his frontrunner status, the president also planned to criss-cross the country between now and next Tuesday making a final appeal for votes.



Republican U.S. presidential nominee Bob Dole hands out candy, toothbrushes and deodorant from a plastic pumpkin to members of his travelling press corps, while airborne aboard his campaign plane Citizen's Ship enroute from Atlanta to Columbus, Ohio late Thursday. Sen. Dole, surrounded by campaign staffers wearing Bill Clinton masks, was honouring the Halloween holiday tradition of giving treats as he prepares to kick off a marathon 96 hour campaign trip until election day (Reuters photo)

U.S. officials arrive in China for arms talks

BEIJING (R) — U.S. Undersecretary of State Lynn Davis has arrived in Beijing for talks next week with Chinese officials on arms proliferation, a spokesman at the U.S. embassy in Beijing said Friday.

Ms. Davis would lay the groundwork for a visit by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher later this month, his first to China since a 1994 trip that ended in disaster because of wrangling over human rights issues.

Deputy assistant Secretary of State Robert Einhorn flew into Beijing earlier this week for expert talks ahead of Ms. Davis' visit, the spokesman said.

"Expert talks are going on today and she (Davis) will have her main talks on the 4th and the 5th on security issues and on proliferation issues," the spokesman said.

"She'll be going back to the United States to report to the secretary of state," the spokesman said, adding that arms control would be just one of many issues Mr. Christopher would bring up with his Chinese hosts.

"He (Christopher) has a lot of things on his agenda," the spokesman said.

Sino-U.S. ties have long been strained by disputes over human rights, Taiwan, copyright theft in China and Beijing's terms of entry to the World Trade Organisation.

Washington has expressed deep concern over the Beijing court sentencing of prominent Chinese pro-democracy activist Wang Dan Wednesday to 11 years in prison for plotting to overthrow the government.

Officials in Washington have said Ms. Davis also would discuss how the two countries might implement a decade-old peaceful nuclear cooperation pact that could allow sales of U.S. nuclear power reactors to China.

The accord, signed in 1985, has not been put into effect because of U.S. suspicions that Beijing is peddling nuclear technology to unsafeguarded nuclear facilities abroad, most notably to Pakistan. Both China and Pakistan deny the charges.

French judge rejects cut in Bardot memoirs

PARIS (R) — A French judge Thursday rejected a request by the son and an ex-husband of film star Brigitte Bardot to excise passages from her memoirs branding the baby a "murder" and his father a "vulgar macho."

Judge Alain Lacabaratz, who rules on emergency matters, threw out their request for immediate action. Another court will rule separately on Dec. 4 on whether cuts should be made at all and whether the two should receive damages.

Bardot's son and ex-spouse had requested that 80 pages be slashed from her 555-page *Initiales B.B.*

under strict French laws governing privacy. The book, published a month ago, has already sold close to 400,000 copies.

Bardot, 62, now an animal rights campaigner, recounted in detail how she felt suicidal when she learnt she was pregnant with Nicolas and described him as "a tumour feeding off me."

The often bitter autobiography branded Nicolas' father Jacques, an actor-turned-producer who was married to Bardot from 1959 to 1963, "a vulgar, dictatorial and uncontrolled macho, a gigolo, alcoholic and despicable."

China orders Hong Kong activists out of country

BEIJING (R) — China has ordered two Hong Kong democracy activists to leave the country after they tried to petition Beijing officials over the political future of the colony, Hong Kong sources and Chinese media said Friday.

Beijing police had told activists Wong Chung-Ki and Chui Pak-Tai to leave China, the official Xinhua news agency said.

Hong Kong sources said the two had been trying to petition officials over what they called the "undemocratic" methods being used by China to select a chief executive to run the British colony after it reverts to Beijing rule on July 1, 1997.

"The Beijing Public Security Department issued a warning to Chui and Wong, asking them to return (to) Hong Kong within a stated time," Xinhua said.

It was not clear if the two campaigners, both members of local councils in the British colony, had already left Beijing.

Officials of a Beijing hotel had filed a public disturbance complaint against the two for distributing materials to reporters in the hotel Thursday evening, Xinhua said.

Anxiety has grown in Hong Kong in recent months over how much political freedom China will allow after it regains control of a colony run from London for more than 150 years.

The jailing of leading Chinese dissident Wang Dan for 11 years by a Beijing court Wednesday awakened fears that those who criticised the post-handover, Beijing-backed administration could face a similar fate.

Chinese authorities, currently overseeing the selection of a group to choose Hong Kong's first post-colonial chief executive, also barred two other pro-

democracy advocates from entering the country Thursday, activists in Hong Kong said.

Officials at the Sha Tau Kok border post refused entry to Andrew and Chan Kwok-Leung of the Hong Kong Democratic Party after keeping them in a room for two hours, to told Reuters.

All four activists had planned to lobby the China-selected preparatory committee that will select the chief executive, and to appeal for a reprieve of Hong Kong's current elected legislature, which Beijing has vowed to scrap.

A copy of a statement by the activists obtained by Reuters accused China of using undemocratic methods to choose the chief executive and condemned the decision to bar their colleagues from entering the country.

Their petition urged Beijing to scrap a plan to appoint a provisional legislature in place of the elected legislative council, and demanded the territory's future leader be elected instead of chosen by a China-controlled selection committee.

China, which has bitterly opposed democratic reforms introduced in Hong Kong in recent years, says the official selection committee will be well equipped to represent the will of the colony's six million people.

The rules for choosing the chief executive would guarantee a selection that was fair, honest and without corruption, Chinese Vice Premier Qian Qichen told Preparatory Committee members in a speech Friday.

Analysts said a list of candidates for the selection committee released Friday was dominated by pro-China politicians. The preparatory committee was scheduled to vote on the list Saturday.



A member of the public reacts as Diana, Princess of Wales, walks past outside the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute in Sydney Friday. Princess Diana is in Australia on a three-day fund raising trip (Reuters photo)

Diana magic seems to be fading on trip down under

SYDNEY (R) — When she came to Australia in the 1980s, tens of thousands of admirers and royal watchers lined the streets for a glimpse of Britain's Princess Diana.

Amid the full fanfare of a royal tour and with her husband at her side, the princess managed to persuade even hardened Australian republicans to forget their historical grudge.

But that was at the height of her celebrity, when her beauty made her the world's most photographed woman, and before a messy divorce from heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles.

This time, on a four-day charity visit, Princess Diana is still a princess but no longer a royal — and the Diana magic seems to be fading.

The crowds have been disappointing. She was rudely crowded by other dancers at a socialite dinner. And, worst of all, a mere American actress snapped up the best hotel suite in town.

The main aim of Princess Diana's trip to Sydney, which she visited as a relatively new bride in 1983 and again in 1988, has been to raise money for a cardiac research institute.

More than 800 of Sydney's social and business elite paid a \$790 each to join the princess at a fund-raising dinner after her arrival Thursday and several hundred fans waited outside to see her. However,



Princess Diana arrives at the Victor Chang charity dinner Thursday, where guests paid \$800 a ticket (Reuters photo)

100 tickets went unsold. Diners had already been briefed that the princess was no longer "your royal highness" — plain "ma'am" or "princess" would do — and

that curseys were not required.

But the compare had to ask guests to give her space as she began her first dance and reporters at the dinner said Princess Diana was constantly being approached by diners from other tables. She left the dinner about 45 minutes early, pleading tiredness.

"The organisation has been disastrous," said one veteran royal-watcher Friday, noting that Princess Diana had brought only two staff on the trip and there had been no pre-tour inspections by Scotland yard and British diplomats.

"The problem is she no longer has the palace behind her, organising everything and making sure it all goes smoothly."

Another fleet street journalist, who broke off from covering a state visit to Thailand by Queen Elizabeth for Princess Diana's trip to Sydney, said the two trips could not be compared.

"The Thailand visit was prepared for two years. Embassy officials had walked along every step of her route," he said.

Princess Diana's trip to Sydney was organised rather more quickly — plans to put her in the best suite at a top Sydney hotel had to be changed because Priscilla Presley, widow of the king of rock and roll Elvis Presley, already had it booked.

Burma's military says it is trying to understand Suu Kyi

RANGOON (R) — Burma's military government is taking steps to improve relations with Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) party, a senior military official said Friday.

Senior Defence Ministry official Colonel Kyaw Thein said both the pro-democracy movement and the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) have been trying to break an impasse after being locked in a war of words for over a year.

"Both sides may be trying to improve the situation (and) their understanding of each other," Col. Kyaw Thein told reporters after the SLORC's monthly news conference.

He said Kyi Maung, a top aide to Ms. Suu Kyi and deputy chairman of the NLD, was detained on Oct. 23 for questioning partly to give the SLORC an understanding of the pro-democracy party's current attitude.

"We wanted to have a clearer picture of what we are thinking about the NLD and concerning the current situation."

Mr. Kyi Maung was released Monday. A senior military officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Than Tun — Ms. Suu Kyi's liaison officer during her six years of house arrest — has also recently had a couple of brief meetings with the Nobel Peace laureate, Col. Kyaw Thein confirmed.

Although some diplomats say the meetings could reflect warming relations between the SLORC and the pro-democracy movement, Col. Kyaw Thein said the meetings did not have any major significance.

Ms. Suu Kyi has made repeated, unanswered calls for dialogue with the SLORC since the government released her from house arrest in July 1995.

The SLORC traditionally says the forum for dialogue is the National Convention, a group of delegates mostly hand-picked by the SLORC who have met intermittently since 1993 to draft guidelines for a new constitution.

Ms. Suu Kyi angered the government last November when she pulled her NLD party out of the talks, saying the forum did not represent the will of the people.

The NLD won more than 80 per cent of

the seats in a 1990 election, which was called by the SLORC, but was never allowed to take power because the government refused to recognise the poll results.

Col. Kyaw Thein also hinted that Ms. Suu Kyi may be allowed to hold her regular weekend speeches to supporters — if she agrees to some ground rules.

"We are allowing the NLD to hold meetings inside the compound," he said. "We have asked people and asked those who are responsible inside the compound that if they want to make a meeting they can do it inside the compound."

Since her release, Ms. Suu Kyi has made speeches to supporters Saturdays and Sundays from the front gates of her University Avenue home, drawing crowds of up to about 10,000 people.

The government has taken various measures to prevent the speeches, because it says such gatherings are illegal and they obstruct the flow of traffic.

For the past five weekends the SLORC has blocked vehicle and pedestrian access to University Avenue by setting up checkpoints manned by heavily-armed security police. The barricades were removed earlier this week and remained down Friday.

Col. Kyaw Thein would not say if barricades would be raised again, but a senior official told Reuters if Ms. Suu Kyi agreed to meet supporters inside her compound the government would not do anything.

"But if they are outside, the police will probably come and round them up," he said.

Ms. Suu Kyi said Friday up to seven NLD youth members were detained by the military government over the past week.

Ms. Suu Kyi told a news conference the NLD youth members were picked up for questioning about a student protest Wednesday last week. At least two of them had been released, and she said they were interrogated "very severely."

"They have been taking away some of our young people for questioning," she said. "There are still four to five young people who are under detention and there are two more who were detained but have been released. These are people I know, there may be others."

Ozone hole over Antarctic on track for new record

GENEVA (R) — If the current size of the ozone hole over the Antarctic is maintained until the middle of next week, it will be another record setting season, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) predicted Thursday.

The United Nations agency also said the hole had extended over the most southern part of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans northward to a latitude of nearly 50 degrees south for a few days during the past week.

The hole's extension so far northward during the south hemisphere spring season was "an extremely rare event" and meant these ocean areas had been exposed to UV-B radiation as intensive as that over the tropical belt, according to WMO.

Experts say that any sustained surge in radiation reaching the earth could lead to a rise in cancer in humans and animals, and lower crop yields. It could also affect the marine food chain — starting with microscopic plankton in the oceans.

The Pzone, a fragile shield of gas which absorbs and blocks most Ultra-Violet rays of the sun, is being depleted by man-made chemicals. These include chlorofluorocarbons (used in aerosols and refrigeration), the pesticide methyl bromide and solvents.

The surface covered by the ozone hole over the Antarctic, currently 18 million square kilometres, has persisted for 50 days, according to the WMO's network of satellite and observing stations in the region.

Similar long duration of this size was observed only in 1993 and 1995 during Antarctic spring seasons.

"If current size is maintained until the middle of next week this will be another record setting season," WMO's ozone expert Dr Rumen Boykov said in the statement.

"The extension of the ozone hole values so far northward over the ocean areas, although for only a few days, exposes sub-

Antarctic and upper middle latitude regions to UV-B radiation as intensive as it is over the tropical belt which is an extremely rare event," the Bulgarian scientist added.

The ocean areas covered stretch from 30 degrees west to 60 degrees east longitudes, according to the Geneva-based agency.

Current coverage was slightly below the maximum of more than 20 million square kilometres twice the surface of Europe from the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains — reached at the end of September-early October.

Temperatures in the lower stratosphere, where the ozone is depleted nearly 90 per cent for the seventh week, continue to be between six and eight degrees centigrade lower than the pre-ozone hole average, according to the statement.

Cold is a major factor facilitating ozone destruction by man-made compounds containing chlorine and bromine.

WMO has said it does not expect the Antarctic-spring Ozone hole phenomenon to end until the second half of the 21st century when environmental control measures take full effect.

Under the 1987 Montreal protocol of the Vienna convention, governments agreed to phase out chemicals destroying the ozone.

Industrialised countries have banned chlorofluorocarbons, halons and carbon tetrachloride, while developing countries have until the year 2010 to conform.

Industrialised countries will phase out hydrochlorofluorocarbons by the year 2030 and were to freeze methyl bromide levels by last year.

Mercedo told reporters there were no casualties in the air and mortar bombardment of the soldiers captured guerrilla camps.

Mercedo said 39 fighting but the MILF had inflicted more than 100 deaths and suffered less. Mercedo said the fighting, the moment should pursue to forge a peace agreement with the MILF to one made with the

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Plane crashes into Sao Paulo homes killing 104

SAO PAULO (R) — A Fokker-100 aircraft of Brazil's Tam Airline slammed into homes in a densely populated area of Sao Paulo Thursday, killing all 96 people on board and at least eight on the ground, authorities said.

Rio De Janeiro-bound Flight 402 caught fire as it skidded over the rooftops of the middle-class Parque Jaboaquara neighbourhood, leaving a trail of destruction.

The plane, which had trouble gaining altitude after takeoff, barrelled through the neighbourhood as residents were on their way to work.

One eyewitness said the plane was spraying jet fuel as it hurtled towards the ground, drenching a man on the street who died after becoming engulfed in flames.

Chunks of fuselage, mortar and brick were strewn throughout a three-block area. Military police said at least eight people were killed on the ground.

A spokesman at Sao Paulo's Congonhas Regional Airport, where the plane took off, said all 90 passengers and six crew members were confirmed dead.

Another official at the airport said the plane had difficulty gaining altitude and never managed to climb above 30 metres.

Firemen worked late into the evening to remove bodies from the crash site, lining them up in black plastic bags on a sidewalk as stunned residents looked on.

The plane was carrying more than a dozen executives of Brazilian and international banks and companies. They included American David Francis Tobolla, a financial director at Citibank CCLN in Brazil, Italian Camillo Marina, a vice-president of the Generali Do Brasil Insurance Company and Dutchman Louwerus Hoogerheide, sales director of the dairy company Parmalat Brasil, the companies said.

The plane crashed shortly after takeoff at 8:20 a.m./5:20 a.m. est (1020 GMT), just 3 kilometres from the airport. It barely missed a primary school where more



A helicopter flies over the area in Sao Paulo where a Tam Airline's Fokker 100 jet crashed in a densely populated area shortly after takeoff from Congonhas Airport Thursday (Reuters photo)

than 200 children had begun their morning lessons.

"Parts of the plane fell on my roof and in my backyard. We heard a big crash, and then windows and glass went flying all over the place," housewife Eusa Da Silva said.

"We ran outside, and all the neighbours were out screaming. Nobody knew what was going on," she said.

Nineteen-year-old Rodrigo Carreiro said he drove to the scene of the disaster after dropping off a cousin and two friends at the airport, where they boarded the fatal flight.

"I begged them to stay because there was a party in Sao Paulo this evening. I can't believe this has happened," he said.

"I left them and was leaving the airport when I heard there was an accident and that it was a tam plane going to Rio. I came here immediately."

Amazed police officials said they found nearly four kilograms of cocaine in a black plastic bag in the plane's debris.

Hundreds of rescue workers formed human chains to remove rubble and aircraft remains in the search for victims. Four residents were

reportedly hospitalized, but authorities said the injury list would probably be longer.

A Tam spokesman said the company had located the plane's two black boxes and would release a report on the incident within about 30 days. A report by federal aviation officials was expected in three months.

Tam Stock, which has risen 125 per cent so far this year, fell 24 per cent after the crash. Latin America's fastest-growing regional airline, Tam last week announced plans to begin regular flights to the United States.



Dozens of bodies are lined up by firemen and rescue workers at the site where a Tam Airlines Fokker 100 jet crashed, shortly after takeoff in Sao Paulo Thursday. Flight 402, a shuttle bound for Rio de Janeiro, went down less than two miles from Congonhas Airport, crashing into apartment buildings and cars. Congonhas is located in the densely populated heart of the city, South America's largest (Reuters photo)

Refugees caught in Zaire crossfire

GISENYI, Rwanda (R) — Some 200,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees were reported caught in crossfire in eastern Zaire Friday as foreign aid workers prepared to evacuate the embattled city of Goma.

"Katale (camp) is empty. The refugees say that they are on the run and caught in the crossfire," Michele Quintaglie of the World Food Programme (WFP) told Reuters by telephone from Goma.

She said Katale Camp, 45 kilometres north of the north Kivu provincial capital of Goma, had held 210,000 refugees. It was the largest refugee camp in eastern Zaire before two weeks of fighting uprooted more than half a million refugees.

The refugees are Rwandan Hutus and the rebels are Tutsis.

Ms. Quintaglie said she did not know where the refugees were heading, but she guessed it might be towards the southwest. Mugunga camp, the largest in the world, is in that direction.

Ms. Quintaglie and other workers also said the 107 foreign aid workers in Goma were told to gather at concentration points in the city Friday for possible evacuation from eastern Zaire.

From the nearby Rwandan border town of Gisenyi, I saw fighting pick up Friday after a full with mortars and anti-aircraft fire blasting in and out of the Goma region.

"Our objective today is to obtain clearance from the local authorities to evacuate the aid workers," said Hubert Edongo, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representative in Zaire's capital Kinshasa.

Zairean military sources said an evacuation was likely to take place Friday. Unruly Zairean soldiers have seized aid agency vehicles and looted at least one agency office in the past two days.

At the Zaire-Rwanda border crossing, the atmosphere was surreal. Six Zairean soldiers at the border post danced naked, waving automatic weapons, chanting and sprinkling water on each other.

Goma is the administrative centre for relief operations for 1.1 million Rwandan Hutu refugees, 200,000 Burundians and tens of thousands of Zaireans fleeing the fighting in eastern Zaire.

Many of them have been on the run from fighting for at least a week amid fears they will be hit by hunger and epidemics.

The refugees now live in a constant state of panic. "At one point yesterday we had refugees on the road walking in both directions," said Panos Moutzias, a UNHCR spokesman in Goma.

"They are really panicking. They are very

scared. They do not know where to go," he added from his office in Goma city.

Zairean rebels told Reuters correspondent Buchizya Mseteka Friday at least 100 foreigners are trapped in the Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Zairean town of Bukavu where fighting has raged for days.

They said fighters of the former Rwandan Hutu army had been resisting a rebel advance on the town. "They have one or two artillery batteries," a rebel commander said of the Rwandan fighters.

Bukavu, about 120 kilometres south of Goma, was the scene of some of the fiercest fighting in eastern Zaire and the Roman Catholic Archbishop Christophe Munzihirwa was killed Tuesday.

Edongo told Reuters that several local UNHCR workers had been killed in an ambush in Bukavu by unidentified attackers.

The conflict in eastern Zaire assumed greater international dimensions with the Kinshasa government adding Uganda to the list of its enemies and more world leaders urging round table peace negotiations.

State Zairean radio Friday said Zaire's transitional parliament voted to sever diplomatic relations with Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda, the three neighbours accused by Kinshasa of waging war against the sprawling central African nation.

In Nairobi, a Kenyan official said a summit of at least seven African states in Kenya on Nov. 5 would focus on the war in eastern Zaire. David Kikaya of the Foreign Ministry said Kenya had invited Zaire but had no official response yet.

Zaire Thursday defiantly rejected peace talks with its neighbours despite fears that victories by advancing ethnic Tutsi rebels could herald the disintegration of the country.

"The government will not undertake any negotiation. will not participate in any regional conference while a part of national territory is occupied by foreign forces," Zairean Prime Minister Kengo Wa Dondo told an emergency parliament session Thursday.

He said Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda planned to annex Zairean territory.

Foreign armies have denied fighting alongside Tutsi rebels in Zaire but Rwanda has said it sent troops on an incursion this week after artillery and machinegun exchanges across its border.

The new United Nations envoy to central Africa, Raymond Chretien, said he would focus on securing a ceasefire before tackling any other problems in the growing crisis.

Sri Lanka's Jayewardene dies leaving mixed legacy

COLOMBO (R) — Former Sri Lankan President Junius Richard Jayewardene died Friday, ending a political life that saw his country move from hope after independence from Britain in 1948 to the tragedy of a bitter ethnic war.

Mr. Jayewardene, 90, who led the Indian Ocean island for 11 years from 1977 to 1988 as prime minister and executive president, died of heart failure at a private hospital in Colombo where he was being treated for cancer, hospital officials said.

Mr. Jayewardene was credited with liberalising a rigid socialist economy but criticised for authoritarianism and for failing to stem a bloody war with Tamils fighting for an independent state in northern and eastern Sri Lanka.

Nicknamed "the old fox" for his political shrewdness, Mr. Jayewardene survived four assassination attempts during his long public career.

"He showed Sri Lanka the path to the new world," said Ranil Wickremesinghe, head of the United National Party, the retired Mr. Jayewardene's political group.

"He set us on the path to modernisation, a path which has been followed by successive governments," Mr. Wickremesinghe, a former prime minister, told a news conference.

Analysts said the late leader's ultimate legacy is the war, which began on his watch in 1983 and rages on today, having caused immeasurable damage to the economy and cost at least 50,000 lives while creating about 500,000 refugees.

Mr. Jayewardene will be irrevocably associated with a controversial pact with India in 1987 aimed at ending the war by Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas for independence for minority Tamils in the north and east.

The accord led to the arrival of tens of thousands of Indian troops on the island in a bloody but unsuccessful bid to disarm the Tamil separatists.

Mr. Jayewardene won a landslide victory in a 1977 general election which gave his United National Party (UNP) an unprecedented four-fifths majority in parliament.

The son of a former chief justice, Mr. Jayewardene was born on Sept. 17, 1906 and started as a lawyer before entering politics as a member of the Colombo Municipal Council in 1940.

Mr. Jayewardene survived four assassination attempts during his 50 years in politics, the last being in 198.

Muslim rebel faction driven out of southern Philippine town — senator

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines (AFP) — The Philippine government Friday claimed a major victory over Muslim rebels who have been forced out of a southern town after a week of heavy fighting.

Orlando Mercado, chairman of the Senate Defense Committee, has been to Tupo-Tupo in Basilan island which has been the scene of fierce fighting between troops and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels. He said order had been restored.

Mr. Mercado told reporters here there were no civilian casualties in the air raids and mortar bombardment. The soldiers captured three guerrilla camps.

The military said 39 rebels and five soldiers died in the fighting but the MILF said it had inflicted more casualties and suffered less.

Mr. Mercado said that despite the fighting, the government should pursue efforts to forge a peace agreement with the MILF similar to one made with the

main Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) rebel group.

The Philippines and the MNLF signed a landmark peace pact on Sept. 2 that ended the MNLF's 24-year separatist armed struggle in exchange for a large measure of autonomy for the southern region's Islamic minority.

A senior MILF official said his group welcomed an offer by Libya to mediate peace talks with the Philippine government.

MILF Vice-Chairman for Military Affairs Al Haj Murad told AFP in Cotabato, north of Zamboanga, that his group appreciated offers from both Muslim and non-Muslim countries to broker the talks "as long as it is fair to everybody."

Newspaper reports Friday said Libya, through its ambassador to Manila Rajab Azzarouk, had offered to mediate the negotiations.

Libya is a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, a forum of Muslim countries, which

brokered a peace agreement between Manila and the main MNLF.

The more fundamentalist MILF, which left the MNLF in 1977, was excluded from the talks and remains a major impediment to peace in the southern region. It has an estimated 10,000 guerrillas.

Mr. Murad, speaking from the MILF mountain headquarters outside Cotabato, said he welcomed the Libyan offer "as they will help in solving the problem."

President Fidel Ramos' chief aide, Ruben Torres, said in Manila Thursday that he had received a letter from MILF vice chairman for political affairs Ghazali Jaafar mooting an informal meeting on Nov. 10.

Negotiating panel to forge an interim ceasefire before holding formal talks but the MILF wants a truce to be signed later.

Quarter-million children under arms, study says

WASHINGTON (R) — About a quarter of a million children under 18, some as young as seven, have fought in 33 armed conflicts worldwide in the past year, a humanitarian group has reported.

The International Save the Children Alliance said Britain, Canada, Cuba and Pakistan had been actively opposing a bid to raise to 18 the minimum age for recruitment to military duty because some of them accept volunteers as young as 16 into their own armed forces.

Most children volunteer or are forced into armed rebel groups, but governments have sent children under 18 into combat in such places as Cambodia, Colombia and Britain in its conflict in Northern Ireland, Save the Children said.

Easier to recruit than adults and often viewed as more expendable, they are typically used for hazardous

duty such as clearing landmines and spying. Girls are sometimes recruited to provide sex to their comrades, the study said.

"Overwhelmingly, the children are from the poorest and most marginalized sectors of society" and separated from their families, the Geneva-based group said in a 250-page report.

Children: The Invisible Soldiers.

"They are invisible because those who employ them deny their existence," it said. "Many do not return from the battlefield because they are killed or, having been injured, are abandoned."

It said the spread of lightweight automatic weapons, such as the Soviet-built AK47 — weapon of choice of many third world guerrillas — had made it possible for kids to fight on an almost-equal footing with adults.

Although the participation of children in armed conflict is not new, the mediaeval squire could not don his knight's armour until he had reached physical maturity.

"Even a generation ago, battlefield weapons were heavy and cumbersome," limiting children's participation to support roles, the study said.

Charles McCormack, president of the U.S. chapter of Save the Children, said at a news conference the report marked the first step in a systematic effort to document the use of children soldiers.

"It certainly is not going to be eliminated," he said. "The question is whether it can be mitigated and reduced from what it might otherwise be."

The study said the number of child soldiers tended to rise as conflicts dragged on, involving ever younger children who have acquired

only one main skill: how to handle a gun.

Save the Children has been leading a campaign to boost the internationally sanctioned minimum recruitment age to 18 from 15 as stipulated in the 1989 United Nations convention on the rights of the child.

Final negotiations are to take place in Geneva in January to develop an optional protocol to the convention that would raise the minimum age to 18, a position only a handful of countries oppose.

"The world community must work together to halt this horrific use of kids as soldiers," said Beth Verhey with the U.N. study on the impact of armed conflict on children, which is to present its own recommendations to the General Assembly on Nov. 11.

Mars meteorite inspires search for life in space

LONDON (R) — Astronomers looking for signs of extraterrestrial life were revitalised when U.S. scientists said they had found evidence of life on Mars.

NASA's claim that tiny holes in a 16-million-year-old meteorite were the fossilised remains of bacteria was controversial at best. But it fired the imagination of the world and gave new impetus to the flagging U.S. space programme.

British scientists have now backed up NASA, saying that they had found additional evidence that an ancient chunk of Mars rock had once harboured bacteria.

They also said closer examination of a second meteorite turned up chemical traces that might have been left by ancient micro-organisms.

"We think that this is backing for the supposition that there is life on Mars," Colin Pillinger, an astronomer at Britain's Open University, told a news conference Thursday.

Mr. Pillinger and colleagues gathered a variety of experts who said they had found compelling body of evidence suggesting that there really was "life out there."

Biologists such as Don Cowan of University College,

London, told about extremophiles — bacteria that can live in hotter-than-boiling water or deep inside the earth where there is no air.

If life can exist in such hostile environments on earth, perhaps it can also survive on inhospitable planets, he said.

David Desmarais of NASA's Ames Research Centre said scientists would meet there later this month to discuss looking for life in sub-surface oceans on Jupiter's moon Europa.

Such a mission could be launched soon after 2005, he said.

Scientists at London's Natural History Museum said they would release for examination a meteorite they had been saving since 1913. The meteorite, which fell on Egypt in 1911, is virtually untouched.

"We think the time is right," said Monica Grady, the museum's expert on meteorites. She said one piece of the meteorite would still contain pristine Martian atmospheric gases which could give hints about conditions on the planet in years past.

What scientists really need from Mars now is a piece of sedimentary rock — one that formed at the bottom of an ocean or a river. Such rocks contain the best fossils of ancient life on earth.

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Peace needs all help

DURING HIS current tour of the region Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov has sought to reassert his country's role in the Middle East peace process. But Primakov appeared also keen on stressing that Russia's pursuit of a stronger role in the peace talks is aimed at complementing, and not competing with, the American role. The Russian minister's expression of interests in reactivating his country's role comes days after a similar bid by French President Jacques Chirac.

The difference between the two endeavours, however, is that while a stronger European involvement in the peace talks could be prevented by Israel, Russia is already a recognised co-sponsor of the peace process and the reactivating of its role would, to a large extent, depend on the determination with which it works to achieve that goal.

Despite the serious domestic problems with which it is grappling, the Russian Federation remains a superpower with strong interests in the Middle East. Russia can help the peace process and can work to better serve its interests in the region. And the peace process needs the Russian help just as it needs the European one. In fact, the peace process, with the numerous difficulties it is facing, can use the help of any country that is able and willing to offer it.

Russia and Europe are certainly able to help realise peace in the region. The problem, however, is that Israel, which is blocking the peace talks, is also adamant in refusing the Europeans and the Russians any real political role in the peace process. The Arabs, on their part, welcome and encourage the Russian and European bids for a more assertive and direct role in the talks. The problem, therefore, is between Israel and those two major players in the international arena. If the Russians and the Europeans do believe that they should be more involved in the politics of the Middle East, they should get Israel to accept that. Neither Europe nor Russia lack the political and economic weight that can be effective in pressuring Israel into accepting their participation in the efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

No one can belittle the role the United States has played in the peace process. But neither Russia nor Europe aim to discredit that role or compete with it. They want to support it. This support must be welcome because it can accelerate the peace process and strengthen the peace that it should ultimately lead.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

RUSSIAN FOREIGN Minister Yevgeny Primakov's visit to the Middle East region is designed to help Moscow regain its former role as co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily. But it also reflects the world community's desire to salvage the peace process which is faltering largely due to the U.S. failure to exercise a neutral role and force Israel to comply with the requirements of a just peace, said the paper. It should be noted that Mr. Primakov's tour of the region comes close on the heels of a decision by the European Union to appoint a special envoy to pursue the issue of the peace process and play a positive role towards ending the Arab-Israeli conflict, said the daily. However, and in view of Israel's shameful behaviour towards the French president during his visit to Jerusalem and in the light of the Jewish state's rejection of any role by the European Union, one cannot expect a better behaviour from the Israeli government towards Mr. Primakov, according to the paper. On the whole, said the paper, Jordan, which is keen on attaining a permanent and comprehensive peace, can only wish the Russian envoy success in giving momentum to the peace process.

A WRITER for Al Dustour described the so-called Middle East economic summit, due in Cairo in November, as a club for business people and economists where they exchange views or learn of ideas about regional projects. But no one should be deceived by the notion that such a meeting would open the door for immediate investments or the flow of capital into the countries of the region, according to Taher Adwan. The writer said that investments can only happen in an atmosphere of peace, security and stability, which is lacking at present due to Israel's policies. Furthermore, the tension in the Gulf region, largely due to American moves there and its massing of military power to threaten the Arab countries, is adding to the problem and driving away any potential investors, he said. The Europeans and the Americans are more concerned with marketing their military hardware than computers or factory machinery, and in 1995 alone, they sold the Arab World \$40 billion worth of military equipment, charged the writer. He expressed fear that the Cairo summit could be a U.S.-Zionist ploy to distract the Arabs' attention from unifying their position and pooling their national resources to secure their intrinsic power.

Jordanian Perspective

Netanyahu's intransigence could lead to unwanted armed conflict

By Dr. Musa Keilani

THE PLEDGE that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made to Jewish settlers in Hebron on Thursday that they would never be "uprooted — not now, not tomorrow, never," has clearly underscored Israel's determination not to relinquish territory to the Palestinians in the final status negotiations — that is if and when the two sides reach that point.

But in the meantime Mr. Netanyahu's pledge is a direct invitation to violence in Hebron, where radical settlers have vowed to open fire on Palestinian police.

Mr. Netanyahu also appears to be ignoring demands by the Shin Bet security agency to curb militant settlers in Hebron and a warning by Likud leaders themselves that there could be a "holocaust" in the streets of the West Bank town if the settlers are not reined in.

Of course, we cannot overlook the dilemma that Mr. Netanyahu finds himself in. On the one hand, he is under pressure to fulfil the obligations of the Oslo accords — meaning an Israeli withdrawal from 80 per cent of Hebron — but on the other, he is confronted by the headline position of the settlers. Even if he manages to have his way in the negotiations with the Palestinians and achieve his "security" objectives in Hebron before pulling out Israeli forces from the town, there is no guarantee whatsoever that the settlers and the Palestinians of Hebron would not go for each other's throat at the first given chance.

Quite simply, if the Israeli army leaves Hebron, the settlers will take over the town with their guns, and if the army decides to remain, then the Palestinians would be

agitating in the town and elsewhere in the West Bank pressing their legitimate demand that the Israeli government live up to its commitments undertaken under the Oslo accord.

It is also interesting to note that opinion polls show that a majority of Israelis believes that the settlers have to leave Hebron sooner or later. This would also indicate that Mr. Netanyahu's never-say-die position against forcing the settlers to leave Hebron in fact contradicts public opinion among his own countrymen, and that the 420 or so settlers in Hebron are holding much of the rest of the Israelis at ransom.

What we fail to understand is why the Israeli government should have found itself in a dilemma at this point in time. The settlers were in Hebron when the Israeli Labour government and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) signed the Oslo I and II accords. The writing was very much on the wall that Hebron would be a serious flash-point between Jews and Arabs. Instead of launching moves since 1993 to let the message be sent clear to the settlers throughout the West Bank that they would have to quit the occupied territories sooner or later, the Labour government itself pursued a soft approach and piecemeal solutions within the context of implementing the Oslo deals. And today it seems a bit too late to convince the settlers that they have no choice but to quit Hebron and perhaps move out to Kiryat Arba on the outskirts of the town.

Of course, such thinking is based on an assumption that Mr. Netanyahu understands the dynamics of making peace

with the Palestinians and is pragmatic when it comes to taking key decisions that will serve the cause of peace.

However, Mr. Netanyahu's record since assuming office indicates otherwise. For reasons best known to himself, Mr. Netanyahu appears to be convinced that Israel could dictate its own terms while making peace with the Palestinians. The conviction stems from the physical hold that the Israeli army has over the Palestinian territories and is part and parcel of the Israeli fortress mentality. It also seems to be abundantly clear at this point in time that external pressure, whether from the U.S. or any other quarters, on Israel will not be able to make much dent on the Israeli approach to the peace process.

So, the key question remains: What do we, the Arabs and Muslims, do to convince the Israelis that peaceful coexistence in the Middle East is indeed our objective but that this goal is contingent upon Israel respecting all the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims? Or do we need another war to realign the elements and make it the bridge to peace?

Of course, no one in the region wants another war, least of all Jordanians. But whether we like it or not, the reality is that the Israeli intransigence, whether regarding the Palestinians, Syria or Lebanon, is pushing the situation towards the brink of war.

More than anyone else, Mr. Netanyahu should be aware of this reality. And he would be naive to think that his political fortunes are secured in the event of a war in the Middle East.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Europe's role in the region is important, especially in view of the U.S. bias

Reviewed by
Elia Nasrallah

THE LOCAL dailies discussed the Middle East question in light of European and American envoys' visits to the region, the repercussions of Mr. Chirac's Middle Eastern tour, Israel's adamant position towards the implementation of the Oslo agreements and domestic affairs.

Commenting on the Russian foreign minister's current tour of the region, a writer for Al Ra'i said that since the downfall of the Soviet empire, Moscow's international role weakened and it has been assuming a symbolic role in the Middle East.

Mahmoud Rimawi said that the Arabs want to see Moscow joining hands with the rest of the European countries to achieve a balance in this region and want to see the world community involved in the peace process to achieve justice.

No one wants Russia to interfere in a manner that would overshadow the European role and therefore the Arabs welcome the Soviet envoy's mission if it is truly backed by the European's stand, he added.

The writer said no one wishes to see Washington playing solo in the Middle East peace process because of its open biased stand towards the Israeli aggressor.

Saleh Qallab, a writer for Al Dustour, reflected on the aborted mission of the U.S. envoy Dennis Ross, saying that his withdrawal from the field of negotiations has left behind many unanswered questions.

Washington wanted Ross to contain the tension that was created by the opening of the tunnel under the Aqsa Mosque and to keep the Israelis and the Palestinians locked up in negotiations until the coming American presidential elections, said the writer.

All that the U.S. administration wanted to see was not a solution to the problem or an Israeli implementation of the Oslo agreement over Hebron but rather a calming of the situation until the U.S. elections.

The writer said that Mr. Ross himself tried to benefit from any progress in the negotiations in order to gain credibility in

Washington and ensure for himself a higher position at the White House in case Mr. Clinton wins the coming elections.

He said that since the U.S. has failed to pressure Israel into respecting the Oslo agreement, and due to its insincerity in its drive to achieve a genuine peace, Mr. Ross's mission ended in a fiasco. Reflecting on the French president's tour of the region, Samir Qatani, a writer for Al Ra'i daily, said that Mr. Chirac deserves respect for his honourable stand and backing of the Arab Nation's efforts.

The French president has truly expressed the concept of peace, security and stability in this region, stressing that these can be achieved through a genuine peace which gives the Arabs their rights in their homeland.

He said that it is in the Arab Nation's interest to see Europe pursue a course totally different from that of the United States, which is an unfair mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and it is in the interest of the Arabs to bolster their cultural and economic links with France.

The writer said that the Arabs demand that France, in exchange, continue to support the rights of the Palestinians in the face of Israel's arrogance and intransigence and also bring an end to the sanctions imposed on the Israelis.

Mr. Chirac's tour of the Middle East might not yield immediate results, since Europe is still trying to strengthen its foothold in the region, said Mohammad Kawash, a writer for Al Dustour. Europe is still seeking a solid ground for itself in the region, against many odds, without provoking the United States, said the writer.

However, he said, the enthusiastic welcome which was accorded the French leader during his tour of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt reflects the deep appreciation and affection the Arabs feel towards the new French role.

The writer said that the warm welcome and feelings serve as an invitation to France to seek contribute most positively to the building of a genuine and comprehensive peace that would restore legitimate Arab

rights.

Dwelling on the same theme, Mohammad Barhoumeh, a writer for Al Ra'i, said that while France and Italy are wholeheartedly behind a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, and supporting the Palestinian people's rights, the Netherlands, Belgium and Britain are still showing reservations in this matter.

It is very important for the Arabs to bolster their contacts with Europe, which is financing 80 per cent of the Palestine National Authority's needs, in order to win the favour of all the European countries towards backing a lasting settlement, called the writer.

He said that Germany, which has been very generous to the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular, can be made to throw its weight behind France in a serious quest for a comprehensive settlement, especially in light of the U.S. failure to achieve the aspired end.

Furthermore, said the writer, the U.S. seems unable to do anything or exercise any pressure on Israel without full backing from Europe and Japan, which finance the region's economic schemes.

A writer for Al Ra'i described the murder of a ten-year-old Palestinian boy in the West Bank by a Jewish settler as a dastard crime which reflects the ill nature of the Zionists occupying Palestine.

Ibrahim Absi said that the murderer represents the extremists who are obsessed by a hysterical lust for killing Arabs and reflects to the world the real facts about the so-called Israeli democracy. There is no difference between the Jewish extremists' criminal acts in Palestine and the ongoing atrocities and massacres committed by the primitive tribes of Rwanda and Zaire against each other, he added.

Obsessed by their extremist and fanatic beliefs and ideologies, the Jewish settlers, who continue to occupy the Palestinian lands, stop at nothing in their drive to carry out the goals of Zionism in this region, something which proves that there can be no peace in this area unless this criminal mentality has

been uprooted for ever.

Commenting on the aborted American-sponsored Israeli-Palestinian negotiations for the implementation of the Oslo agreement on Hebron, Sultan Al Hattab, a writer for Al Ra'i, said that tension is building up in the region due to Israel's intransigence and its refusal to implement the agreements.

The Palestinians, who are keen on securing their rights, have succumbed to the world community's will and endured the two weeks of fruitless negotiations, but they are now giving up in despair.

The negotiations have done nothing to stop Israel from building settlements, from holding on to the Arab city of Hebron, from killing more Palestinian children and from maintaining the closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, he added.

What can the world community do now that the Americans proved unable to exercise any pressure on the Israelis, asked the writer who stressed the need for immediate action on the part of the world community as a whole to prevent a new conflagration in this region.

A writer for Al Dustour praised the efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture for turning its attention to the development of the high, rain-fed lands of Jordan, seeking international help to pursue their plantation with fruit and forest trees.

Mohammad Daoud said that the ministry's endeavours over the past three decades, in cooperation with the World Food Programme (WFP), have yielded very positive results, which proves that the plans were sound and effective.

The \$16 million allocated by the WFP for the development of Jordanian high lands in the coming five years should be sufficient to help the country increase its food production, he added. The writer urged the Ministry of Agriculture to publish the achievements realised in the development of high lands over the past years so as to encourage further cooperation between local farmers and the WFP towards more fruitful results.

LETTERS

Too cruel to die

To the Editor:

I AM a 12-year-old student at the New English School, and would like to write my innermost feelings about the murder of the 10-year-old Palestinian child.

It was a very, very inhuman and cruel thing to do: only an inhuman and heartless creature could do such a thing. A savage is a better word. Who does he think he is? God? Going around killing anybody he wants? Just walking around and suddenly saying to himself: "Oh gee, I think I should kill that young Palestinian boy. I don't want him to live."

Who or what could do such a terrible thing? I know this man is a Jewish settler. A long history of hostility between Israelis and Arabs is unknown to me, but I thought peace should, and I say could, have resolved it.

Do Israelis think they are better than Arabs? They should not because every single human being in the human race is equal to the other.

I really don't think anyone should feel avenged towards him. Don't hope for him to suddenly die in an accident. Let's all hope that he feels the pain. The pain that all of Hilmi's family has gone through.

I hope he feels the stinging, heartbreaking pain that everyone in Palestine felt about Hilmi's death. How would he like it if someone he loved terribly died this sort of death? It is a horrible feeling and I sincerely hope he feels this pain one day because it is more satisfying than death itself.

I wish the people in authority would take action. I wish somebody could make them look at this situation. They are not put in whatever important position they are in to do nothing. Maybe they should try to live in Palestine for one night. Feel the fear that someone might break into your house and kill you. Or sense that someone in the street might suddenly shoot you. People over there have to go through this day and night.

This innocent young boy who was brutally killed was going to donate blood to his young sister, who might die now that she cannot have it. This should have never happened. Whatever happened to children's rights? They have a right to live, a right not to be hit by anyone, the right to live safely. As if the children's rights were never invented.

I just want to conclude this letter adding that we should respect Palestinians and what they go through every day.

Rounwah A. Bseiso,
Amman.

Implications of a kidnap

To the Editor:

AS THE old saying goes, all is well that ends well, and well did the drama that evolved around the kidnapping of a baby girl end, thanks God. Everybody was relieved when baby and family were happily reunited after 35 days of intensive search and televised campaign.

There are, however, two issues of social and moral significance that baffle me. First, I do wonder how safely and efficiently monitored our hospitals are.

Apparently, it did not take the mastermind of a professional kidnapper to abduct a baby from the cradle and leave unnoticed by any of the nurses, guards or whatever employees were available then and there. A woman driven only by instinct and despair easily and successfully achieves her goal, due to the lack of proper supervision and attendance. If cases of abduction are not a daily occurrence in our society, this does by no means justify the lack of alertness among the hospital's management and total negligence in this particular case. To make things even worse, according to police sources as Jordan Times quotes in its October 29 issue, the kidnapper managed to further deceive the Civil Status Department, obtain a birth certificate and register the baby in the family book to assure that all legal formalities had been completed; and indeed they were.

Aren't birth certificates supposed to be issued on the basis of an authentic hospital document that identifies both mother and child? Or was our kidnapper capable of producing such a certificate before the Civil Status Department as well? Definitely something seriously went wrong, and it is for the authorities to take action and deal with the offenders of the law.

Last but not least bizarre are the circumstances that were so decisive and crucial in motivating a mother of six to violate the law in order to keep her marriage from falling apart. Do, really, traditional family values teach that the more children a woman has the less risk she runs to lose a husband, or is it again mistrust, fear and insecurity that lead to strained and unhappy marriages?

Rumiana M. Nuseibeh,
Amman.

Handwritten signature: Rumiana M. Nuseibeh

Tell Madaba excavation identifies settlements spanning nearly 5,000 years

By Rami G. Khouri
Special to the Jordan Times

The city and region of Madaba are best known for their sparkling Byzantine mosaics, but relatively little documentation is available on the earlier cultures that are known to have existed there in previous millennia, especially during the Bronze and Iron Ages. This gap has started to be filled by the results of the 1996 preliminary exploratory season of research at Tell Madaba by a team led by Dr Timothy P. Harrison of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago.

Unperturbed by what he calls "the daunting challenge to archaeological research of the consequences of thousands of years of urban continuity in the Middle East," Dr Harrison set out several years ago to define and explore the ancient settlement history of the modern city of

Madaba. When he surveyed an area of 42 hectares within the city in 1993, as part of a larger, USAID-funded archaeological research project in Madaba, he clearly identified the extent of the Bronze and Iron Age tell in the city centre "that anchors the urban core of ancient Madaba," he told the Jordan Times in a recent interview.

Tell Madaba, a large, low-lying mound and acropolis measuring 16 hectares in area at its base, still protrudes visibly above ground level in the centre of the modern town. The excavation this year focused on an area along the eastern slope of the mound that had been exposed in the 1980s by the clearing activity of tobacco farmers searching for crop fertiliser. The 1993 survey identified this exposure as a good place to excavate, for already visible in the tell was an extensive vertical section of ancient deposits

that documented the site's history. A section cut through this area in the 1996 excavation revealed the earliest occupational levels as dating from the late Early Bronze (EB) I/II period (circa 3200-3000 BC), with two distinct architectural phases identified. The earliest comprised a large wall averaging one metre in width, constructed of unhewn, bolder-size stones, with a possible doorway and threshold preserved in its southern portion. West of the wall was a pavement of cobble-sized stones and east of it was a concentration of ash material that preserved evidence of food preparation activity.

The second architectural phase incorporated parts of the earlier wall to form the eastern wall line of a rectangular structure (probably a room) measuring some 3 by 4 metres. Inside the room was a central fireplace,

bone awls and other household items, and grinders, a basalt quern and other objects used for food preparation. The pottery from this area was tentatively dated to the late EB I/II period.

Based on the presence of a thin layer of wind-blown sand and silt that covered the EB levels, this area seems to have been abandoned for nearly 2,000 years, until it was next inhabited in the Iron Age II period (1000-539 BC). Over five metres of ancient trash deposits were excavated above the EB levels, clarifying aspects of the site's settlement history. These trash deposits were rich in plant and animal remains, providing a wealth of information about the dietary habits of the Iron Age inhabitants of Madaba, and insight into how they adapted to the challenges of the local environment. The deposits also contained a

variety of metal (bronze and iron) objects, jewellery, a number of seals and seal impressions, and other small finds.

In spite of the apparent gap in the town's settlement history produced by the excavations, Madaba was clearly inhabited during the long interval from the EB II to the Iron Age II, spanning the third and second millennia, for pottery shards from the periods in between were found in the secondary dump levels.

Future excavations will attempt to define the nature and extent of settlement during those cultural periods.

On the upper tell, or acropolis, a mapping survey was conducted in 1996 and identified extensive architectural remains. Among the most prominent were a possible Iron Age fortification wall and vaulted structures that are probably from the Roman-

Byzantine period. The west acropolis survey "substantiated the long-standing view that this area of the upper tell contains perhaps the best preserved remains of Madaba from the Bronze and Iron Ages," Dr Harrison said.

The 1996 season has achieved its aims of defining the broad stratigraphic history of Bronze and Iron Age Madaba and assessing the potential for further, long-term excavations. It exposed eight metres of vertical layers of ancient settlements, produced a computerised base map of the entire urban core of the city which can also accommodate future discoveries,

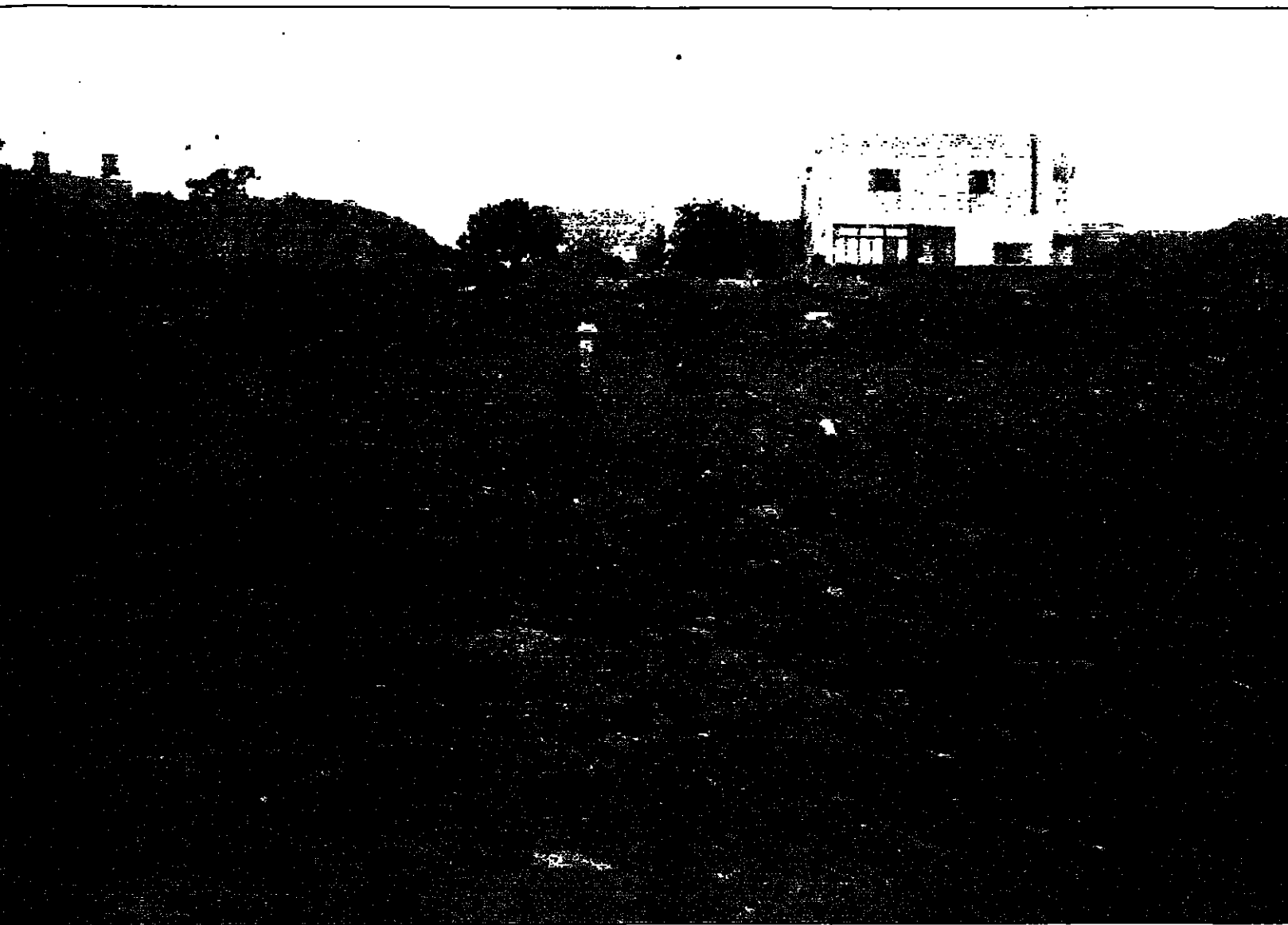
and generated a topographic relief map that defined the extent of the tell. The season also demonstrated the richness of the ancient remains and the considerable potential for future excavations, especially in the area of the west acropolis.

A study season is planned for the spring and summer of 1997.

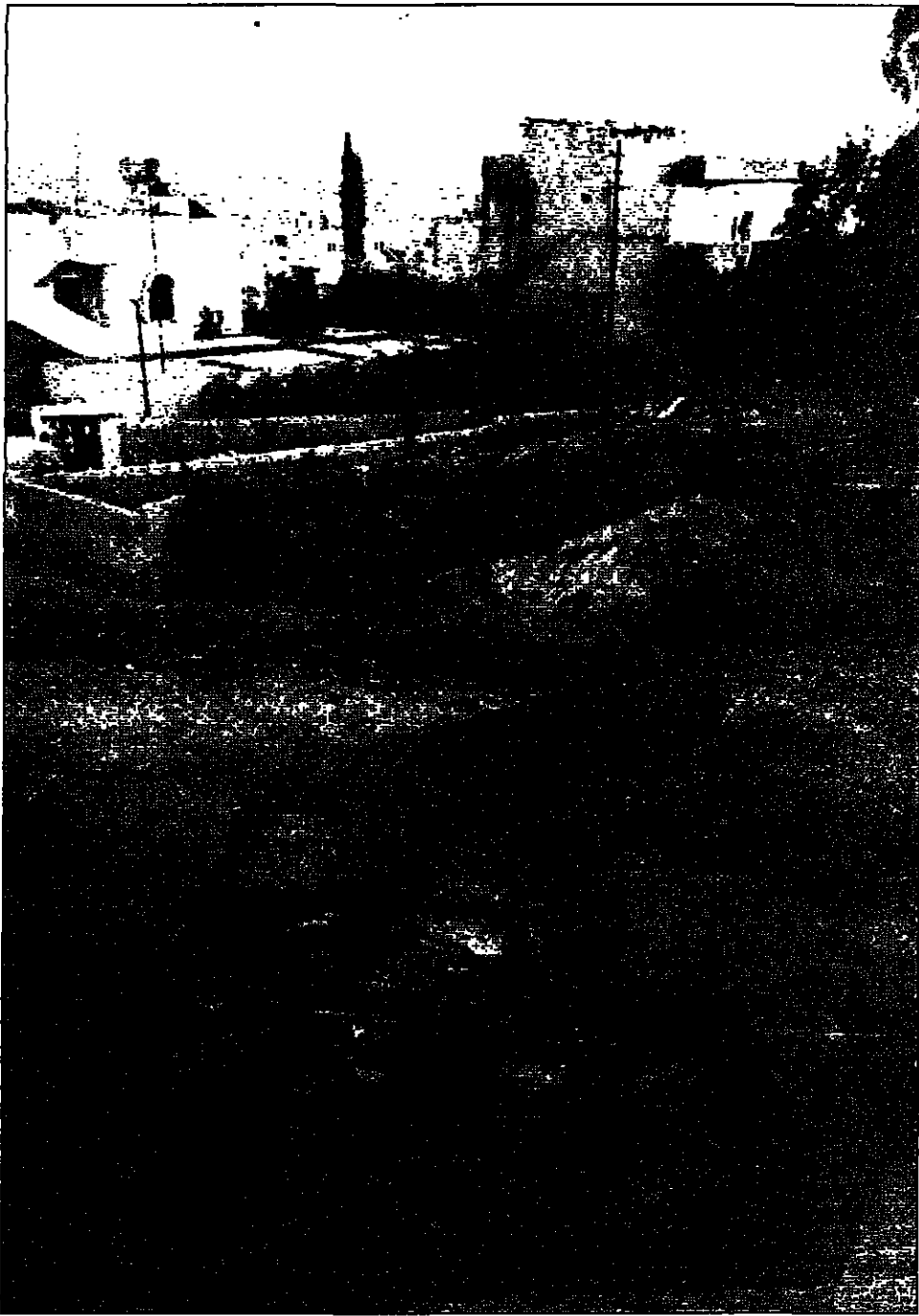
The information being gleaned from this project forms part of a larger, ongoing study of the Madaba Plain region in the Bronze and Iron Ages. Excavations and surveys at Madaba and other sites aim to reconstruct the social, economic and political institutions of

those eras, and to make detailed analyses of the changes that occurred on a regional level, thereby allowing scholars today to chart the dynamic development of social complexity in the region.

The Tell Madaba Archaeological Project's 1996 season was funded by the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) Endowment Fund, the National Geographic Society, and the University of Chicago. The work was undertaken in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities and with the support of the American Centre of Oriental Research (ACOR) in Amman.



Looking east at the west acropolis, with some of the vaulted arches visible (Photos courtesy of Timothy Harrison)



Looking south over one part of the Tell Madaba excavation and towards the Madaba Plain

U.S. sees Hebron deal in 10 days to 2 weeks

(Continued from page 1)

arrangement that will ensure stability in the city throughout the peace process and in the future.

The source, who is close to the peace process, said that both the Israelis and the Palestinians understand that the Hebron agreement will not be an interim arrangement but the basis of future final status of the city that will include the settlers. From the American viewpoint, the main challenge is to find security arrangements that will ensure the safety of both the Palestinians and the settlers without dividing the city.

Palestinians have long argued for the eviction of the settlers from the city's centre. But the American negotiators, according to administration officials, say that there are no plans for the removal of the settlers even as part of the permanent status agreement.

"There is no talk about evicting anybody," the American source said.

Palestinian officials have been disappointed that the American administration choose to push for a compromise between the Israeli stand that calls for modifications of the original agreements and the Palestinian demand for a full implementation of the redeployment accords.

It is not clear, however, if the Palestinian National Authority

(PNA) has accepted that the agreement under negotiations will determine the final status of the settlements inside Hebron.

The Palestinians had said that the settlers could remain in the West Bank if they accept to be under Palestinian jurisdiction. Thus the arrangement regarding Hebron, if reached, could set the future pattern that will govern the relationship between the PNA and the settlements.

If the American understanding of the Hebron arrangement is included an Israeli-Palestinian agreement, the question that will influence Palestinian independence aspirations is: Will the settlement remain under Israeli jurisdiction?

According to analysts the American priority is to get beyond Hebron to salvage the peace process. Once the Hebron crisis is "contained," the peace process, including normalisation between the Arab World and Israel that had been slowed down by the recent outburst, will pick up again — regardless of which administration will be elected to govern the U.S. in next week's elections.

American special Middle East envoy Dennis Ross came back last week after lengthy mediation between Israel and the Palestinians that failed to bring about an agreement. But the State Department remains engaged in mediation efforts to

reach an agreement on the delayed redeployment of Israeli troops.

The apparent American optimism that so far contradicts reality stem from a conclusion reached by the American team that has been directly involved in the negotiations that the Israeli government has realised that it will have to adopt a more realistic position.

"They (the Israelis) have realised that they have to reconcile ideology with reality," an American official, who has recently been in Tel Aviv, said.

Palestinian officials disagree, saying that they do not see any substantive change in the Israeli position. "We see a change in style. They are ready to talk but no change in substance," a Palestinian official commented. But American mediators, judging by interviews with administration officials, are seeking a fundamental Israeli shift.

The U.S. priority, according to the officials, is to ensure the continuity of the process. When asked if the continuity was more important than the kind of agreement reached one official said: "Well, there will be no agreements unless (Yasser) Arafat accepts them. He will have to decide whether it is good or bad for the Palestinians. (It is) not us who will decide."

Most Israelis wants radicals out of Hebron

(Continued from page 1)

cent believe the two communities can learn to live together.

Israeli security officials said last week that plans had been drawn up to prevent any provocation by right-wing elements trying to torpedo the Hebron handover. Press reports said the plans included preventive detention of potential trouble-makers.

Commander Yossi Levy, head of the police investigations division, told Israeli Television Thursday night that a special unit had been set up to deal with Jewish extremists around Hebron.

"We have clear information that Jewish extremists will try in various ways to make trouble in the even of a redeployment in Hebron," he said.

Certain far right-wing leaders have indicated they will go into hiding if the police attempt to detain them or prevent their entry into Hebron and Mr. Levy raised the possibility that there will be "the creation of a right-wing underground given what is happening."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised right-wing supporters on Thursday that Jewish settlers would never be forced to leave Hebron.

"The Jewish community in

Hebron will not be uprooted — not now, not tomorrow, never," he said in a speech to members of the National Religious Party, a key partner in his coalition government.

Jewish settlers in Hebron prevented Palestinian journalists from entering their enclave on Thursday to cover a tour of the area by Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natsheh.

In Jerusalem, hundreds of followers of the late anti-Arab Rabbi Meir Kahane gathered on Thursday to Mark his death, calling on the government to scrap peace deals with the Palestinians.

"We here — many or few, it doesn't matter — are the only people who can save the state of Israel," Kahane's son Benjamin addressed the gathering alongside other former leaders of the banned Kach and Kahane Chai groups.

One speaker announced a new movement would follow in the footsteps of the two groups which Israel outlawed in 1994.

American-born Meir Kahane, who founded Kach and went on to serve in Israel's parliament, advocated forcibly evicting Arabs from Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

He was shot dead by Egyptian born U.S. citizen El Sayyid Nosair in November 1990.

Crown Prince returns

(Continued from page 1)

Hassan met with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, members of his government and leaders of the newly-created federal government. The two leaders reviewed developments in the war-ravaged country and its needs in the process of reconstruction.

The Bosnians are working on two fronts, building institutions for the new state and developing the economy. Prime Minister Hassan Muradovic told the Crown Prince. "We seek your help in this effort (or reconstruction) just as much as we have always appreciated (the Kingdom's) support and understanding throughout the past several years," Mr. Muradovic said at a working lunch he and other senior Bosnian leaders held in the Crown Prince's honour.

The two sides explored specific areas where Jordan could assist in the effort of reconstruction, and they discussed establishing a

Jordanian diplomatic mission in Sarajevo. Bosnia currently has a representative office in Amman, whose cost was donated by the Hashemite fund, which continues to provide assistance to the Bosnians in addition to other kinds of humanitarian support that Jordan extends to them.

Bosnia is organising a fund-raising conference at Brussels in February and would like Islamic countries in particular to provide much-needed economic assistance, especially where employment opportunities can be provided. The Crown Prince pledged to do everything he can to help and reviewed with the Bosnian leaders ways and means to achieve their goals.

While in Sarajevo, His Royal Highness visited with the Jordanian contingent in IFOR (the Nato-led Implementation Force for Bosnia).

It was Prince Hassan's fourth visit to Bosnia and Croatia in as many years. The Crown Prince also

met at Sarajevo airport, before his departure for Zagreb, with Saba Rimaluddin, president for special duties of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP), which is organising a seminar on religion in Sarajevo and in New York.

The Crown Prince flew into Sarajevo from Vienna, where the evening before he met jointly with the head of the Islamic centre, the chief rabbi in Austria and Cardinal Koning as part of the inter-faith dialogue that HRH is sponsoring. The meeting took place at the National Library, to which Prince Hassan donated \$10,000, allocated especially to restore ancient books in Arabic, which the library had acquired originally from Yemen.

Just before his arrival in Vienna the Crown Prince had concluded a three-day visit to Prague.

Before Prague, the Crown Prince visited London, Paris and Luxembourg, where he delivered lectures.

Israel fires negotiator for meeting with Peres

(Continued from page 1)

accord, for example whether the Jewish settlers would need permission from the Palestinian municipality to extend their houses.

Throughout the negotiations Mr. Netanyahu has kept the agreement which is taking shape under wraps, and even some of the cabinet ministers were not informed.

The government did not suggest that Gen. Shalom had leaked details of the

agreement to Mr. Peres. However, Mr. Mordechai told the cabinet Friday "there cannot be a situation in which an officer meets political figures without my permission," army radio reported.

Labour Party lawmaker Dalia Itzik condemned the suspension of Gen. Shalom as a "wretched decision."

"The prime minister does not know the meaning of democracy," Mr. Itzik said.

Gen. Shalom's spokesman, Shlomo Dror, confirmed that the general

met Mr. Peres and Mr. Beilin, but only at "social affairs which had no relation to the negotiations with the Palestinians."

He said the general regularly met with politicians from both the left and the right "who are his friends. Some are ministers, some former ministers and others are deputies."

"It was a private meeting, so he didn't need permission. If he had been asked to brief someone, he would have sought permission," Mr. Dror said.

Primakov arrives

(Continued from page 1)

After meeting with Israeli leaders on Thursday, Mr. Primakov said he had received assurances that Israel would respect its Oslo commitments and at

Friday's press conference with Mr. Arafat said that despite the difficulties, "I am still optimistic."

"Everybody should know there is light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

Mr. Arafat was less

upbeat, telling reporters who asked him if any progress had been achieved in ongoing negotiations on the Hebron pullout, "I am sorry to say there is nothing." He said the negotiators were breaking off their

talks for the day and that he was to discuss the state of negotiations with his cabinet and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee on Friday night.

"We are doing our best to push the peace process forward and it is important to keep it going not only on

the Palestinian track but on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks as well," he said.

Turning to Mr. Primakov, he added, "I say to you, we are committed to the peace process but we hope the other side will be committed to it and implement the agreements accurately and honestly."

Jordan's bankers applaud currency liberalisation moves

AMMAN (Agencies) — Jordan's decision to ease controls on foreign currency deposits this week has freed up hundreds of millions of dollars for investment and taken a major stride towards financial deregulation, bankers said Thursday.

The moves, announced Wednesday, slashed the percentage of foreign currency deposits which must be placed with the central bank, eased restrictions on investing those deposits, and removed limits on foreign currency deposits held by Jordanians.

They also gave banks greater control over their short term cash flow by introducing a degree of flexibility in the amounts they are required to place every day with the central bank.

"It's another step towards liberalisation and it should be commended," said Hani Qadi, senior deputy general manager at Arab Jordan Investment Bank.

"Around 40 per cent of deposits in Jordan's banking system are in foreign currency and until now the system just hasn't been benefiting from them," he told Reuters.

The reduction in reserve requirements of foreign deposits which the banks must place with the central bank is expected to release around \$650 million for more profitable investment.

But the sting in the tail for banks is that the remaining 14 per cent of foreign deposits which must still be placed with the central bank will not receive interest. Previously banks had to place 35 per cent, but the whole amount accrued interest.

"This is going to force banks to shake up their treasury departments," said Mr. Qadi. "At the moment they are pretty sleepy outfits... That's going to have to change."

The new central bank ruling allows money in foreign currency deposits to be invested in a wide range of financial instruments, including margin trading and swaps. Previously banks were only allowed to re-deposit in Euro-dollar accounts.

But one banker said only a fraction of the newly liberalised deposits would be pumped back into the local economy.

"Only eight per cent of the money from foreign currency deposits ends up being lent locally," said Mifteh Agel. "Another 35 per cent is with the central bank and the rest is invested internationally. That isn't going to change overnight."

The central bank still restricts most foreign currency lending to export-oriented projects, bankers say. Bankers were also divided as to whether the central bank achieved its stated aim

of galvanising stagnant interbank markets.

"They have injected more liquidity by giving the banks flexibility on their dollar reserves," said one banker who deals with Jordan's shallow and volatile overnight lending market.

But Mr. Qadi said banks needed more lending instruments if they were to rely on interbank markets rather than the rudimentary weekly government issues of certificate of deposits (CDs).

Mr. Agel said the general lifting of regulations could prepare Jordan for a more sophisticated money market.

"It will deepen the foreign exchange market and open the door for derivative trading and risk hedging techniques which are vital to developing a capital market," said Mr. Agel.

Although the moves are mainly aimed at improving the climate for dollar investment, they could also boost faith in Jordan's dollar, bankers said.

"It added to freedom of movement of foreign exchange in the country... When people feel the environment is free and movement of funds is not restricted, it will encourage people who kept their money outside the country to bring it back," said Mr. Agel.

saying: "We have enough (dinar) reserves, we can cope."

Associated Press (AP) writer John Halaby wrote that the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) has liberalised its foreign currency regulations in a move signalling growing financial confidence for the first time since an economic crisis in 1988.

According to AP, a senior official at CBJ said Thursday: "The state treasury decided to free up to \$800 million in commercial banks' funds deposited with Central Bank in the past eight years."

A regulation issued Wednesday stipulates a reduction of 21 per cent to 14 per cent mandatory foreign currency deposits with the Central Bank from Jordan's 21 commercial banks," said the official, who insisted on anonymity in line with CBJ rules.

He told the Associated Press that foreign currency deposits in Jordanian banks amount to \$3.4 billion, 35 per cent of which used to be the mandatory fund deposited at the Central Bank to bolster hard-currency reserves.

"On that 35 per cent, the Central Bank used to pay a three per cent interest rate to banks," he said. "Now, we will not pay any interest for the new 14 per cent mandatory fund."

also removes restrictions on foreign currency dealings for Jordanians. "Residents are allowed free transactions in hard currency like non-residents," he said.

Khaled Masri, a senior investment officer at the Arab Jordan Investment Bank, said the regulation was "a fairly positive move because it offers incentives for local businessmen and makes Jordan more attractive for foreign investors."

A shortcoming, Mr. Masri added, was the free interest on the remaining 14 per cent frozen funds of commercial banks.

"Overall, it is a further

step in a liberalisation process and reflects the confidence of CBJ in foreign currency reserves," he said.

The Central Bank imposed restrictions on foreign currency dealings in 1988, when the Kingdom found itself straining under \$8.3 billion in foreign debts accumulated in the 1980s.

The debt depleted the treasury's reserves of gold and foreign currency, forcing the Jordanian dinar to devalue by 60 per cent.

But as a result of an austerity programme, launched in 1989 under the supervision of the World Bank and

the International Monetary Fund, the economy started to recover.

Foreign currency reserves are now estimated at \$600 million, inflation was brought down in eight years by 12 per cent to six per cent.

Jordan also boasts of an annual growth rate of six per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) since 1993, a reduced budget deficit of four per cent of GDP compared with 19 per cent in 1990 and an unemployment rate of 15 per cent of the work force, compared with 25 per cent six years ago.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Discuss with fellow associates your finest ambitions today and make concrete plans to make them a reality. This evening should be devoted to spending as much time with your loved ones and bringing harmony to your home.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) By using new gadgets in your life today you can easily improve your surroundings and enjoy them for some time to come. This evening you can be quite successful if you can gain the assistance of some knowledgeable individual.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You have a fine idea at this time for improving your relationships with close friends and enjoying being in their company more in the days ahead. With the assistance of some bigwig you can gain your long-time desires.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get your home more attractive and function today and add to the harmony there with your loved ones, through the use of modern devices or equipment which will make your residence more of a comfortable place.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Show your fellow associates that you appreciate them today with praise and improve the relationships to guarantee future alliance. In the days ahead you can discover the method of operation to get some tasks completed.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Talk over an idea today with an ally which can bring about greater mutual income to those involved, then work out a fine plan together. This evening will be good for you to consult with some bigwig and get his or her ideas.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 22) By being outstandingly innovative today, you can make real progress in obtaining the approval of those in authority and by doing so you will gain prestige and stature, which will increase your financial situation.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Bring your plans of operation out in a dramatic manner and make fast progress with them by their help in a campaign for your success. A knowledgeable individual will help with any ideas you have developed.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) A clever friend early today points the way to gain greater success if you are willing to listen. So put ideas which are presented in such a manner as to be acknowledged by some bigwig. These ideas will be quite beneficial.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Bring your finest ideas and talents to the attention of bigwigs today who can help you to commercialise on them and make your career activities more financially secure for the days ahead. Tonight go out on the town with friends.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You have many interests of a personal or career nature today, so have your influence felt and gain new fellow associates, also who will remain in your life. This evening is good for meeting with close friends for some fun.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) A big surprise for your mate in the morning today can bring far more happiness and accord together so plan something special for him or her which will be unexpected. Avoid disagreements with a fellow associate.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye.

Business

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...Birthstone of November:
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...Jumbles: BRAVO LILAC POT
...Answer: What it takes to be a
...LOT OF DRIVE

Easing of banking regulations seen boosting AFM

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Share prices dipped a little this week as the Jordanian stock market amid profit-taking, but the market is poised for an upward climb following measures adopted by the Central Bank of Jordan, brokers said Friday.

The weekly report of the Amman Financial Market (AFM) said turnover for the week ending Thursday was three million dinars compared with the previous week's 2.8 million dinars. The report said 2.13 million shares changed hands under 2,112 contracts con-

cluded during the week with daily average trading of 600,000 dinars compared with the previous week's 560,000 dinars.

The official AFM share price index based on 60 major companies closed for the week at 148.12 points, down 0.54 points or 0.36 per cent, from the week's opening of 148.66 points.

Industrials accounted for 1.51 million dinars of the weekly volume, followed by commercial banks and financial institutions with 1.01 million dinars, services sector shares with 470,000 dinars (\$662,700) and insurance stocks with 37,400 dinars.

Sectoral indices showed commercial banks and financial institutions losing 0.66 per cent, insurance stock 0.24 per cent, services sector firms 0.25 per cent and industrials 0.02 per cent.

Stocks of 75 companies were involved in the week's trading, with 15 of them closing with gains, 52 losing and eight remaining unchanged, the AFM report said.

Pearl Consulting, a private sector firm which maintains its own market indices, said its general price index dipped by 1.33 per cent.

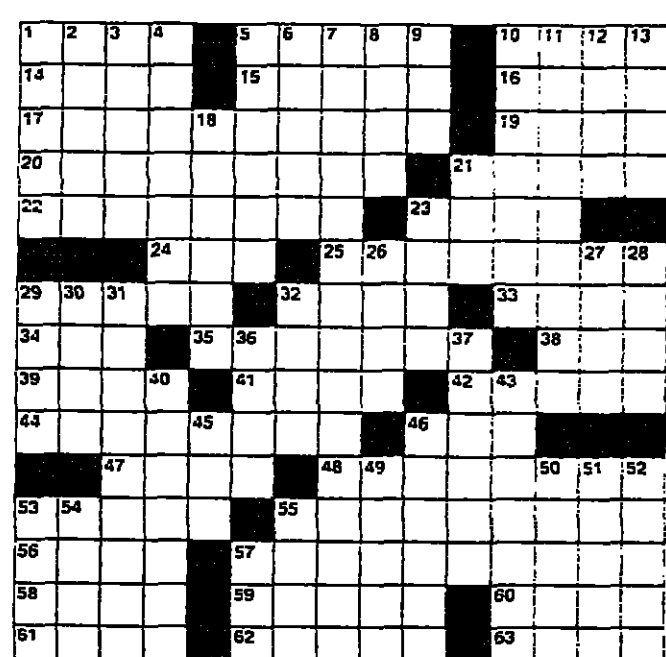
Among services sector companies, energy firms remained unchanged, tourism companies and hotels dipped by 2.71 per cent, transport companies by 0.67 per cent, and press-related firms by 2.31 per cent. Education-related entities gained 0.76 per cent

A further split-up of the banking sector by Pearl showed that commercial banks had gained by 0.68 per cent while investment banks slipped by 2.59 per cent, specialised credit institutions by 1.21 per cent and Islamic banks by 5.62 per cent.

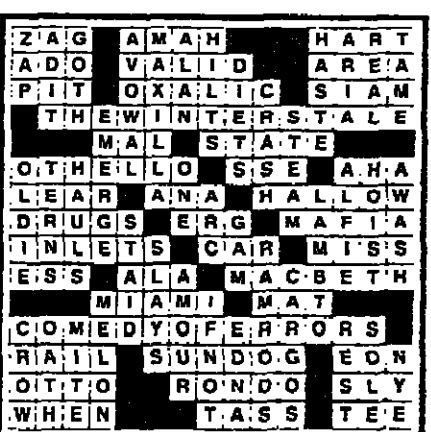
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THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
1 Pretense
5 Tropical fruit
10 "a man with..."
14 Membranous tissue
15 Loosen
16 Not any
17 Sharpener
19 Nap
20 Like a jack-of-all-trades
21 Sheer fabric
22 Captivate
23 Beam
24 Paid notice: abbr.
25 Sort out
29 "— of Two Cities"
32 Actor Maxwell
33 Enthusiast
34 Grant fee
35 Don one's finery
38 Comp. pt.
39 Mink and sable
41 Bet
42 Kitchen wear
44 Perfume bottle, e.g.
46 Stray
47 Irrate
48 Gilbert and Sullivan work
53 Author's signature
55 Comparisons
56 Gab
57 Generously
58 RPM counter, for short
59 — cuisine
60 Hawaiian chant
61 Follow orders
62 Flower
63 Coup d'—



by Christy Ridley



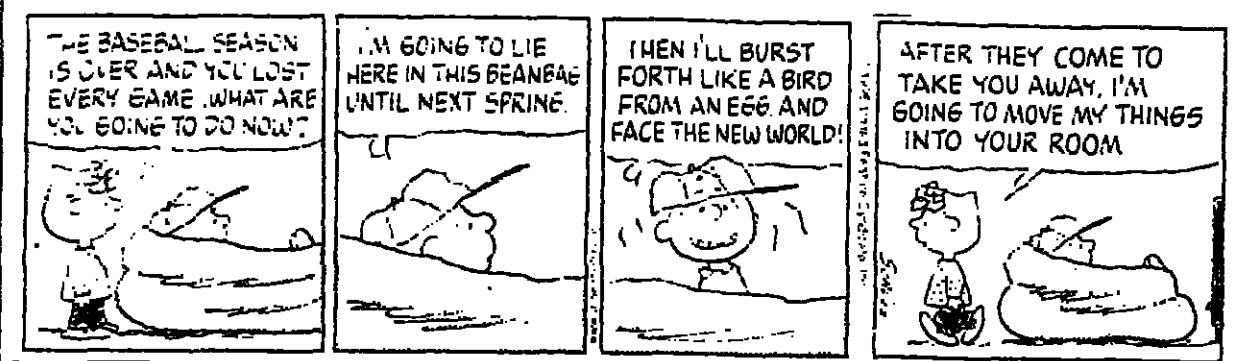
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- DOWN
1 Entertainer Allen
2 Stout lads
3 Vigilant
4 Federal officer
5 Composer
6 Mahler
6 Up to
7 Moon explorer

- 8 Liana
9 Sue — Langdon of TV
10 Hoosier State
11 Mercer/Mancini song
12 Singer Stuart
13 Youth
18 Enclosed
21 Jordan's org.
23 Eskimo house: var.
26 Ascend
27 Violinist
28 Francescatti
29 Code word
30 German: abbr.
31 Astronaut's milieu
32 Cowboy star, Autry
36 Demolish
37 Talking bird
40 Suave one
43 Kind of warm-up
45 Wrath
46 More elusive

- 48 Ex — (one-sided)
50 Lama land
51 "It's A Sin To — Lie"
52 So far
53 Outer prel.
54 Moby Dick
55 Exclamations
57 Orental tea

Peanuts



Andy Capp



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50th NBA season opens with new faces everywhere but Chicago

NEW YORK (R) — A hurricane of change swirled the NBA this summer, but in the calm eye of the storm remain those same old guys from Chicago. Michael Jordan and his Bulls.

The NBA opened its 50th season on Friday with nearly half its players in new uniforms, but the defending champion Bulls, their average age the oldest in the league, made only one change. They added the oldest player in the league, 43-year-old centre Robert Parish.

"With us staying intact, it's a tremendous advantage for us because of the chemistry, teamwork and knowledge of how to play together," said coach Phil Jackson.

The Bulls' four championship rings in six years leave them needing "one for the thumb," it could be the Bulls' last in a while.

Jackson has hinted strongly this will be his last season. Jordan, after his record eighth scoring championship and fourth most valuable player award, signed a one-year deal worth \$30 million. Rebounding demon Dennis Rodman signed a one-year deal worth \$9 million.

"Everyone is questioning if I'm going to be prepared and if I am going to have the same energy that I had last year," said Jordan.

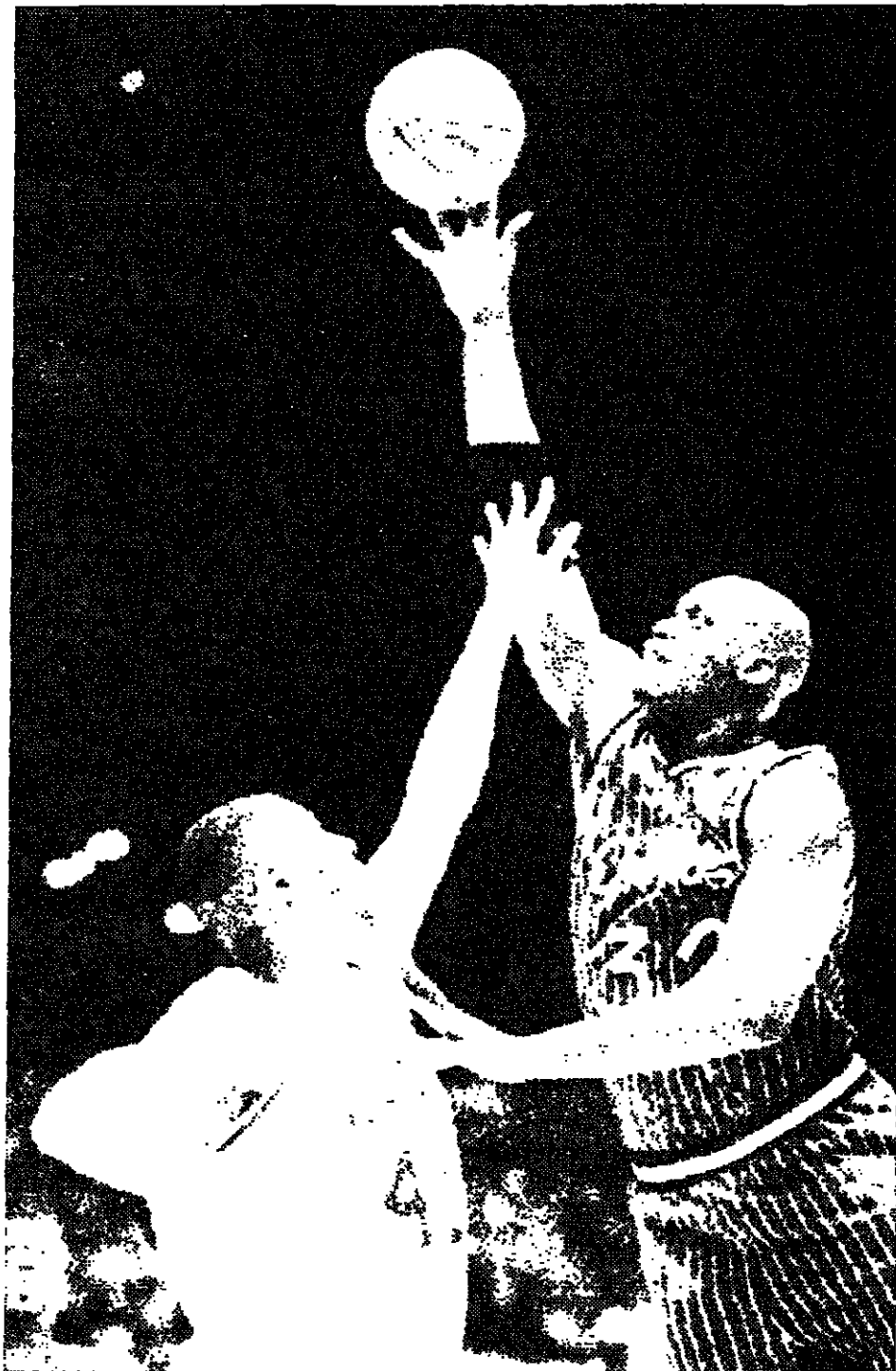
"I wouldn't be here if I didn't think I could play at the same level I have always played at, with the same type of hunger."

There is one early danger sign for Chicago: Scottie Pippen's ankle woes kept him out of all but one pre-season game. Toni Kukoc, last year's sixth man award winner, will have to pick up the slack.

The Knicks and Bulls appear to be most improved in the East.

Centre Patrick Ewing and power forward Charles Oakley, who will start his second season in a row suspended because of fighting in an exhibition game, are still the New Yorkers' heart and soul.

But the plodding Knicks changed three of their five starters and added some \$80 million of offence in forward Larry Johnson, shooting guard Allan Houston



Shaquille O'Neal, formerly of the Orlando Magic, goes up for a basket during a match in the 1995 NBA season (file photo)

and point guard Chris Childs, now sidelined with a broken leg.

"Management went out and spent the money to give us a chance against the Bulls," said Ewing.

"The Knicks look strong on paper, but they are going to go through a period of adjustment to each other," said Jordan.

Washington, out of the playoffs since 1988, acquired point guard Rod

Strickland but luck may have produced the Bulls' best move: They got to keep power forward Juwan Howard when the league overruled the devastated Miami Heat's seven-year, \$100 million deal to lure him away.

Forward Chris Webber, guard Gilbert Cheney and giant centre George Mursan round out a promising starting five.

Orlando was devastated when centre Shaquille O'Neal jumped to the Lakers for \$120 million, leaving Penny Hardaway to try to do it all for the magic.

"We don't have Shaq anymore, but we may do better than people think," said Hardaway. "I may have to shoot more, and we may not be able to really be contenders, but life goes on."

The Spurs appear to be on the wane, forever tagged too soft to reach the finals, and now star centre David Robinson is out with back problems.

Dominique Wilkins came out of exile in Europe, and a Vernon Maxwell from Philadelphia, to play in San Antonio.

Davis, but an unwelcome returnee paces the foot problems of centre Rick Smith.

The Western Conference defending champion Seattle SuperSonics added centre Jim McIlvaine — for an astounding \$33 million over seven years and swingman Craig Ehlo to a squad built around defensive player of the year Gary Payton and all-star forward Shawn Kemp.

The guys on this team believe that to win the finals you have to get there first and experience the pressure of just being there," said Payton. "We don't feel there is anything that can stop U.S. from coming back."

Hakeem Olajuwon led the Rockets to the two championships the Bulls did not win in the last six years, but along with guard Clyde Drexler he is the only starter from last year still around after Houston boldly traded four players to Phoenix for a third superstar, Charles Barkley.

The Rockets also added rebounder Kevin Willis and guard Brent Price, who broke his arm and will miss four months, leaving even more unproven Rookie Matt Maloney at the point.

Barkley remains hopeful. "The Rockets have won in the past and can win again right now."

The Lakers had their biggest single-season change of personnel ever, making room in the budget for O'Neal.

With returning starters Cedric Campbell, Elden Campbell, Eddie Jones and Nick Van Exel, the question Mark for the young, at times temperamental Lakers, who got even younger by drafting high school phenom Kobe Bryant, is depth and how they climb the learning curve, on and off the court.

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FIFA renews call for removal of stadium fences

ZURICH (R) — FIFA said Thursday it would rigorously push for the removal of stadium fences following the soccer tragedy in Guatemala in which more than 80 people were killed.

Soccer's governing world body said wire fences were "caging in fans like animals or criminals" and clearly was a factor in the Guatemala incident just as it had been in similar incident in Sheffield, England seven years ago.

"Now FIFA is even more strongly resolved to impose this policy, not only on the football community but also upon civic authorities who remain sceptical," FIFA said in an advance text of a statement prepared for its monthly newsletter.

Eighty-one people were killed at a World Cup soccer qualifying match in Guatemala city on October 16 when soccer fans fell down stadium seats and a flight of stairs.

Many were crushed to death against the chainlink fence separating the stands

from the pitch in the worst stadium disaster in World Cup history.

Prosecutors and investigators in Guatemala believe one cause of the tragedy was crowding caused by the oversale of official tickets and the wholesale forging of tickets.

In 1989, 95 Liverpool fans were crushed to death at Hillsborough stadium in Sheffield.

"After Hillsborough, the fences came down in the English stadia as a mark of respect for the victims. The same principle must now be applied throughout the world," the FIFA statement said.

FIFA has recently been working on plans to remove fences in France, which is due to host the finals of soccer's premier tournament in 1998.

There was no fencing at this year's European Championship in England, and no major crowd trouble inside the grounds.

Nashville arena to host Lennox-McCall title fight

NASHVILLE (AP) — Nashville has landed a world championship heavyweight fight.

Boxing promoter Don King announced Thursday that Nashville will be the site of the Lennox-Lewis-Oliver McCall World Boxing Council heavyweight title match on Jan. 11.

The fight, which is expected to produce an opponent for Mike Tyson, will take place at the new Nashville arena.

Nashville was chosen over Las Vegas and London as potential sites for the bout for the vacant WBC heavyweight title. King visited Nashville on Oct. 15 and toured the new arena, which would seat 18,000 for boxing.

Science backs Oscar for Melbourne Cup

MELBOURNE (R) — Narrow odds are not the only sign Irish stayer Oscar Schindler is firm favourite to win next Tuesday's Melbourne Cup — science likes the look of him too.

An animal behaviourist who helped develop a method of helping Punters pick winners said on Friday his money was also on the giant chestnut to win the classic.

"I'm an Oscar Schindler fan. They showed him on the news the other night and he just looked stunning," said Geoff Hutson, of the University of Melbourne.

"His hind quarters were rippling with muscles...I was pretty impressed and I think a lot of other people will be too."

Hutson and colleague Marie Haskell published their formula in New Scientist magazine this week after studying the behaviour of over 800 horses shortly before races and then comparing their demeanour against performance.

Their six-point plan aims to separate the also-rans from the champions by looking for behaviour that bears the hallmarks of a loser, like resisting the reins

or tossing of the head. "It will just depend how he handles the pressure on the day," Hutson said of Oscar Schindler, at 5-2 the clear favourite to win the 3,200 metre (two-mile) handicap.

"It's like a wall of noise (before the start). There's nothing like it...If I see him break out in a sweat and starts tossing his head around, I'll start to get nervous myself."

Named after a Hollywood movie about a German industrialist who saved more than 1,000 Polish Jews from Nazi death camps, the horse's recent form includes a win in the Irish stayer and a fast third in the Prix De Larc De Triomphe last month.

Leading Australian trainer Gai Waterhouse, who trained last year's runner-up, "guthin' Leica Dane, did not need any help from science to judge Oscar Schindler the clear favourite.

"I think the Irish horse has just got 50 lengths on the Australian and New Zealand horses — I think Oscar Schindler is the horse to beat," she said this week.

Australia virtually stops for the running of the \$2.2 million (US\$1.7 million) cup and the host state of Victoria declares the day a

Champions Tour is good for tennis — Borg

TOKYO (AFP) — Five-time Wimbledon champion Bjorn Borg forecasts a bright future in the champions tour tennis circuit, spearheading the series with former World Number Ones Jimmy Connors and John McEnroe.

"It's good to have two circuits — the regular circuit and the champions tour circuit. I think people would like to see both circuits. It's good for tennis in general," said the Swede.

Borg, now 40, defeated American Roscoe Tanner 6-2, 6-2 in the first round of the senior tournament at the Ariake Coliseum in Tokyo, the sixth leg of the eight-round champions series.

"They are two different circuits and we are doing our thing very seriously. We are getting more tournaments and it's getting more and more successful every year."

The tour, first put forward by Connors, started in 1993 with only three tournaments. This year, two of the eight were being held outside the United States — Johannesburg and Tokyo.

But next year, there will be 21 tournaments, five in Europe, and one each in Saudi Arabia, Seoul and Osaka.

1993 French Open champion Yannick Noah of France also joined the circuit in July this year.

Borg said the event last year in Tokyo was "very successful," attracting some 8,600 spectators on the semi-final day. It was a bigger crowd than a \$450,000 WTA tournament in September which was held at the same stadium here.

"It's growing and growing every year, but still, you need to play well to win your matches. That's why we are

working hard, practicing a lot and everybody is very competitive on the court."

"Since we started in 1993, it's never been like an exhibition and it's never gonna be. Whenever we are on the court, everybody gives his 100 percent. I think people realize that," added Borg, the winner between 1976 and 1980 at Wimbledon.

McEnroe, who was busy staging a rock'n roll concert on Thursday, was an easy 6-1, 6-4 winner over Japan's Kenzo Ukon. Mel Purcell overpowered Peter Fleming 6-0, 6-1 in an all-American match, while Johan Kriek of South Africa outclassed Guillermo Vilas of Argentina 6-4, 7-5.

Connors and three other seeds received first-round byes.

Chang joins seed casualty list at Paris Open

PARIS (R) — Second seed Michael Chang became the latest casualty in the Paris Open on Thursday, thrashed 6-1, 6-3 in the third round by local favourite Arnaud Boesich.

The American's embarrassing defeat to the Frenchman, ranked only 32 in the world, meant there were only two seeds out of 16 left in the tournament — Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the number four, and Sweden's 12th seeded Thomas Enqvist, who beat Spain's Carlos Moya.

After a black Wednesday for the seeds when world number one Pete Sampras and Boris Becker were among those to bow out, five more seeds bit the dust on Thursday.

South African Wayne Ferreira, Americans Todd Martin and Malivai Washington, Spain's Felix Mantilla and Chang all lost. As a result, veteran Swede Stefan Edberg, who survived a tough challenge from Dutch qualifier Feron Wibier, is now one of the favourites to win the tournament.



Michael Chang

ment he first took in 1990. Edberg, playing in his last tournament in Paris, beat Wibier 4-6, 6-4, 6-2.

The number of upsets in the tournament so far has made the race to qualify for the ATP Tour World Championship next month even more open, although Ferreira's 6-2, 6-4 loss to Sweden's Magnus

Gustafsson means Becker is sure to play in Hanover.

Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek has withdrawn from the Stockholm Open next week with a knee injury and even though it has not ruined his chances of playing in Hanover, it does mean that Andre Agassi has qualified despite losing here in the second

round to Gustafsson.

Much to the delight of a noisy French crowd, Boesich's victory was overwhelming. The Frenchman, who had beaten American Jim Courier in the previous round, quickly led 4-0 and Chang, looking hapless, only salvaged one game in 33 one-sided minutes.

Boesich then led 4-1 in the

second set and the American had to be content with breaking back to 5-3 before finally losing in 75 minutes. A total of 23 unforced errors, unusual for one of the most consistent players on the circuit, helped account for Chang's defeat.

"I thank the crowd who have been a great help," said Boesich, who restored some pride after compatriot Cedric Pioline gestured at the fans after his loss to Kafelnikov on Wednesday.

"As for concentration and consistency, it was probably the best match I have ever played," the Frenchman added.

Thanks to his 6-4, 6-3 victory against Washington, Kafelnikov retains a chance of becoming the first player to take the Paris Open after winning the French Open.

The Parisian crowd now hopes to see him meet Edberg in the final on Sunday.

"All the upsets here make it a wide open tournament and I have a great opportunity to seize," said the Swede, who meets compatriot Enqvist in the quarterfinals said.

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Liverpool midfielder Steve McManaman (C) shoots past FC Sion defender Alan Gaspoz (L) to score the first goal for Liverpool, October 31. Liverpool won the UEFA Cup Winners Cup match 6-3 (Reuters photo)

Liverpool send Sion reeling

LIVERPOOL (R) — A three-goal burst in six minutes by John Barnes and Robbie Fowler spared Liverpool's blushes in their European Cup Winners' Cup match against Sion of Switzerland on Thursday.

Liverpool won the second-round second-leg clash at Anfield 6-3 to go into the quarter-finals 8-4 on aggregate.

Yet the English Premier League team trailed 3-2 on the night at one stage and, although the aggregate score was then 4-4, they were in jeopardy of losing on the away goals rule.

However, a neat close-range goal by Barnes and two strikes in a minute by Fowler hauled Liverpool from their precarious plight and secured a last-eight place. Sion, 2-1 down after the first leg, rattled the

home side by seizing a 2-0 lead through Frederic Chassot and Christophe Bonvin in the first 22 minutes.

Liverpool bounced back with a goal apiece from England midfielder Steve McManaman and Norwegian defender Stig Inge Bjornebye, only to be stunned again when Chassot scored his second of the game and Sion's third of the night.

That could have been a hammer blow for Liverpool in view of Sion's away goals, but the English side transformed the whole shape of the tie when Barnes and Fowler struck three times in six compelling second-half minutes. Czech midfielder Patrik Berger wrapped up victory with the sixth goal in the 89th minute.



Jennifer Capriati

Seles, Capriati advance

CHICAGO (R) — Monica Seles and Jennifer Capriati moved closer to their first showdown since 1992 by advancing in the \$450,000 Ameritech Cup tennis tournament on Thursday.

Seles, who shares the world number one ranking with Steffi Graf, defeated Irina Spirelea 7-6 (7-4) 6-2 in the quarter-final round, taking advantage of 33 unforced errors and 12 double faults by the Romanian.

Capriati, ranked 50th and a late entry in the Chicago event, upset number eight seed, defending NBA champion Magdalena Maleeva 6-3 5-7 6-1 in the second round.

Capriati, who missed two years on the tour because of personal problems and injuries, will face unseeded Meredith McGrath Friday in the quarter-finals. The winner of that match faces Seles, who is playing in her first tournament in a month after taking time to rehabilitate a shoulder injury.

The four-week absence is a brief layoff for the 22-year-old, who was sidelined for more than two years after being stabbed in the back at a tournament in Germany in 1993. Both she and Capriati are enjoying successful returns.

"I haven't played Jennifer since we both have come back," Seles said. "I really don't want to think about it yet."

The two have not squared off since the quarter-final round of the 1992 French Open, which Seles won 6-2 6-2. Seles has a 5-2 lead in career matches against Capriati.

A marquee Seles-Capriati match would certainly benefit the tournament, being played at the University of

Illinois-Chicago Pavilion. Chicago has been a stop on the women's tour since 1973 and despite having the best field in years, with six of the top 10 players entered, crowds this week have been embarrassingly small.

"I think women's tennis needs to do something," said Seles, who told of people stopping her in downtown Chicago, asking why she was in town. "When we play in Europe and Japan, we play before a full house."

One problem could be the star players' lack of interest. Seles asked tournament officials to arrange the schedule so she could attend the defending NBA champion Chicago Bulls' home opener Saturday night.

European Cup Winners' Cup

Leonardo inspires holders PSG to 4-0 victory

PARIS (R) — Holders Paris Saint-Germain, inspired by Brazil's Leonardo, crushed Galatasaray 4-0 in the second leg of their European Cup Winners' Cup second round tie on Wednesday to go through 6-4 on aggregate.

A large contingent of Turkish supporters in the 34,000 crowd at Parc Des Princes threw coins and seats onto the pitch after striker Hakan Sukur, scorer of two goals in Galatasaray's 4-2 first leg win, was denied a penalty 13 minutes from time, but there was no further trouble.

PSG's Latin American duo Leonardo and Julio Cesar Dely Valdes were involved in both first half goals that put the tie back on level terms.

Leonardo, sorely missed in the first leg in Istanbul when he was playing in a friendly for Brazil, steered home a low cross from the right from Dely Valdes in the ninth minute.



Goalkeeper and captain of Paris Saint-Germain Bernard Lama (L) looks at Arif Erdem of Turkish club Galatasaray of Istanbul after making a save in their Cup Winners' Cup second leg match October 31. The PSG attempts to overcome a 2-4 deficit against Galatasaray after the first leg (Reuters photo)

The striker, away on World Cup duty with Pana-

ma when PSG lost their unbeaten league record at

Rennes last weekend, headed in a free kick from out

on the left taken by Leonardo in the 23rd minute after the big Panamanian had been brought down by Umit Duvala.

The ever busy Leonardo turned up on the left wing just before the hour to lay on a low cross which France striker Patrice Loko turned home from the edge of the six-yard box for the third goal.

Minutes after Sukur fell in the PSG box, the French side's other Brazilian Rai capped the night with a fine goal in the 78th minute, tapping the ball over diving keeper Hayrettin Demirbas after being sent through by Dely Valdes.

The Turks had their chances but their finishing was poor and France goalkeeper Bernard Lama, who also missed the away leg through injury, saved well from midfielder Arif Erdem in the dying minutes of the first half and Ergun Penbe after the interval.

Robbiati saves day for Fiorentina

PRAGUE (R) — A second half goal from Anselmo Robbiati salvaged a 1-1 draw for Fiorentina against Sparta Prague on Thursday to earn them a 3-2 aggregate win and a place in the quarter-finals of the Cup Winners' Cup.

Sparta, beaten 2-1 in the first leg in Italy, were back on level terms in the fifth minute when Vratislav Lokvenc chested down a cross just inside the penalty area, turned and fired a shot into the bottom, left-hand corner of the net.

Holding the advantage on the away goals rule, the Czech side then went into a defensive shell, seemingly

content to let Fiorentina control the play, with defender Tomas Repka marking Argentine striker Gabriel Batistuta's every step.

The Italian Cup winners were unable to penetrate the home defence, forcing only one save from Sparta goalkeeper Michal Caloun in the first 45 minutes.

Fiorentina were fortunate to escape being punished when Horst Siegl appeared to be pulled down in the penalty area in the 63rd minute but English referee David Elleray waved play on.

As the Sparta players continued to appeal for a pen-

Draw for the 3rd round of the UEFA Cup made Friday:

Monaco (France)	v	Hamburg (Germany)
Brondby (Denmark)	v	Karlsruhe (Germany)
Tenerife (Spain)	v	Feyenoord (Netherlands)
Anderlecht (Belgium)	v	Helsingborg (Sweden)
Metz (France)	v	Newcastle United (England)
Club Brugge (Belgium)	v	Schalke (Germany)
Internazionale (Italy)	v	Boavista (Portugal)
Valencia (Spain)	v	Besiktas (Turkey)

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Qualified applicants may submit their CVs: The Executive Director P.O.Box 5118 Amman - 11183 Jordan

All applications will be treated in the strictest confidence. No applications will be reviewed after Thursday, November 14, 1996.

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Death toll in Cairo collapse may be 60

CAIRO (Agencies) — The death toll from the collapse of an apartment block in the Egyptian capital neared 50 on Friday as rescue workers gave up hope of finding any more survivors, five days after the tragedy.

Police said that another four bodies were found in the rubble of the 12-storey building in the upmarket Heliopolis suburb, raising the death toll to at least 46.

The collapse is believed to have cost a total of 60 lives, with 14 bodies yet to be recovered, rescue workers said. Nineteen people were injured when the apartment building came crashing down on Sunday night.

A Japanese team managed to insert a "fibrescope" probe through the debris and into a small chamber at the back of the building but found no sign of people, dead or alive.

"We checked in both directions but there was no one there," said Akio Wada, the director of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's overseas disaster assistance division.

The 24 Japanese brought sensitive equipment to detect the heartbeats of any survivors but Mr. Wada said that, contrary to reports in the Egyptian press, they had not heard any. "We checked many parts but there was no response," he said.

Major-General Nader Noman, the Egyptian head of the overall rescue operation, told Reuters the rescue workers came across the three corpses at dawn on Friday. "We estimate there are another 15 or 16 people buried in the building," he added.

A Hungarian team has brought sniffer dogs to the site and were waiting on Friday for Egyptian soldiers to clear shafts for the dogs to get a more accurate fix on any bodies.

After five days of rescue work most of the rubble has been compacted into a solid mass and the chances of anyone surviving underneath must be slim, the rescue workers said.

Mr. Wada said the process of clearing the rubble was now speeding up and the site could be clear within two days. "We are thinking of staying till then," he added.

The Egyptian government press gave prominent coverage to tougher new penalties for landlords who cause death or injury by breaking building regulations, the enforcement of which is notoriously lax in Egypt.

In a decree on Thursday, Prime Minister Kamal Ganzouri set a minimum of five years in jail for any one caught constructing or renovating a building without a licence.

If anyone is killed or if three people are injured when an illegal building collapses, the perpetrators face up to 10 years in jail with hard labour, the decree said. The owners will also have to pay for removing any extra floors built illegally.

Cairo newspapers say an investigating committee is almost certain that workers in one of the flats had weakened the structure by knocking down a few of the columns.

High land prices in Cairo have encouraged landlords to add extra floors illegally. Several buildings have collapsed beneath the extra weight and recent earthquakes have also taken their toll on poorly constructed buildings in the crowded city.

The owner of the Heliopolis building, Rauf Wissi Ibrahim, has been detained and charged with "extreme negligence and unpremeditated murder."

Two engineers who were supervising renovation of a bank on the ground floor have been taken into custody on the same charges as Mr. Ibrahim.



Japanese rescue experts helping Egyptian authorities searching for survivors in the rubble of a 11-storey building use a "fibrescope" probe on Friday (Reuters photo)

Israel welcomes comforting message from Syria but says concerns remain

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel welcomed on Friday messages from Syria that it has no plans to attack the Jewish state, but with troops on alert on both sides of the border some remain wary of Damascus' intentions.

Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov reassured Israeli leaders here Thursday that his talks earlier in the week with the Syrian leadership had convinced him Syria was not preparing a surprise attack out of frustration with Israel's hardline position on the Golan Heights.

"Primakov's visit certainly contributed to resolving misunderstandings and reducing tensions between Israel and Syria," a Foreign Ministry official told AFP on Friday.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said Mr. Primakov had brought with him "very important information" from his stops in Syria and Egypt, and officials said Mr. Levy in return asked the Russian diplomat to convey a message to the Syrian leadership suggesting a quick resumption of peace talks frozen since February.

During his meetings with Mr. Levy and Prime Minister Netanyahu, Mr. Primakov said that Syria was not preparing to attack Israel.

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and that if it should try a military strike, no country, including Russia, would support it.

"I want to be clear that Russia will not support the use of force by any party," Mr. Primakov told journalists after his talks with Mr. Netanyahu in Tel Aviv.

Mr. Netanyahu responded that he considered Mr. Primakov's assurances "important" given Russia's traditionally close ties with Syria.

But he stopped short of taking the message at face value.

"I hope that these impressions brought from Damascus are right and that we will soon resume our negotiations," Mr. Primakov's statements were the latest in a series of reassuring messages coming from Syria.

After the Russian diplomat met his Syrian counterpart Farouq Al Sharaa Wednesday in Damascus, the Syrian foreign minister stated clearly that his government was not contemplating a surprise attack against Israel.

Last month French President Jacques Chirac brought a similar reassuring message from Damascus when he visited Israel.

Tensions had risen steadily between Israel and Syria since Mr. Netanyahu came

to power in June at the head of a right-wing coalition firmly opposed to any return of the Golan Heights which Israel seized in 1967 and "annexed" in 1981.

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad has insisted that peace negotiations be resumed where they left off last February under Israel's previous Labour government, focussing on an agreement in principle to exchange the Golan Heights for peace. Mr. Netanyahu has refused this precondition.

A sudden series of Syrian troop redeployments in Lebanon and near the Golan Heights in August and September followed by beefed up Syrian army manoeuvres in the area last month sparked fears that Damascus was preparing a possible military strike aimed at forcing Israel back to the negotiating table on its terms.

Syria said the troop movements were defensive and accused Israel of exaggerating the tensions to prepare an excuse for a pre-emptive strike against its forces. The official Syrian press has notably expressed concern about an ongoing series of Israeli war games on the Golan Heights.

The Israeli press, which in recent weeks had given wide play to fears of an

impending war with Syria, latched onto Mr. Primakov's "calming message" on Friday.

"No Syrian plans for attack," headlined the English-language Jerusalem Post and the Hebrew Haaretz, referring to Mr. Primakov's comments on Thursday.

The leading military expert for the Haaretz, Zeev Shiff, said that contrary to Israeli army analysts, the U.S. intelligence services had "never taken seriously the risk of war" with Syria.

But Mr. Shiff said even the U.S. view took in the possibility of limited Israeli-Syrian clashes if the peace negotiations are not resumed soon.

Mark Heller, a senior researcher with the Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies, insisted Mr. Assad could still choose the military option.

Noting that Syria's army is not being modernised as quickly as Israel's and that its key surface-to-surface missile force could soon be neutralised by Israeli's ballistic missile defense efforts, Mr. Heller said Syria may be tempted to act even against the odds.

"An unpromising military option now may still seem preferable to an even more unpromising one later," he said.

Palestinian clergyman wants ban on alcohol

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Concerned about growing permissiveness in Palestinian society, a top Muslim cleric said Friday he has issued a religious decree, or fatwa, demanding to ban the sale of alcohol.

The Jerusalem Mufti, Ikrama Sabri, also ruled that some drug dealers should be sentenced to death, saying there were about 30,000 addicts now and that their ranks were swelling.

More than 90 per cent of the Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem are Muslims.

However, Palestinians have been less strict about the ban on alcohol than Muslims in other countries. Liquor is available in some shops and restaurants, especially in cities with a large Christian population, including Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Ramallah.

Restrictions were further eased with the start of Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza in 1994. The self-rule government is largely secular in its outlook, though careful not to break openly with Muslim tradition.

In hotel bars and restaurants where liquor is served, customers often include members of the self-rule government who became accustomed to a more Western lifestyle in their years in exile in Tunisia, Lebanon and Europe.

Sheikh Sabri, the Mufti, said Friday he was concerned that the rules of Islam were being violated more and more.

He said the Palestinian National Authority (PNA)

had recently issued liquor licences to restaurants in the west bank towns of Jerin and Tulkarem, areas where previously alcohol was not served in public.

Restaurant owners there apparently hoped to attract customers from nearby Israel by serving drinks with the meals.

Adel Boulos, who owns a large garden restaurant in Ramallah, said a liquor ban would be bad for business.

"We have hundreds of people coming every night to Ramallah from the West Bank's cities and also from Israel," said Mr. Boulos.

"This is a Christian city," he said.

Asked whether his decree could hurt the already weak Palestinian economy, Sheikh Sabri said: "The most important thing is to respect religion, and God's order. If (selling alcohol) will cause deterioration of our morals, we will lose more."

The liquor decree was issued Thursday by Sheikh Sabri and 12 other religious judges and scholars. The decree asks the PNA not to issue new liquor licences to shops and restaurants and not to renew existing ones.

However, a Palestinian legislator said Friday it was unlikely the sale of liquor would be banned. "I don't think we are moving towards an Islamic society. The secular trend is strong. The Palestinian authority is secular," said Ziad Abu Amr, a member of the 88-seat Palestinian legislative council.

Hariri hits delays in forming government

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Lebanese leaders have run into disagreements on the composition of a new government and it is now not likely to be formed before end of this week, political sources said on Friday.

Most politicians originally expected Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri to complete the formation of the government by the middle of this week after a large majority of parliamentary deputies named him from the job.

However, a source close to the discussions said behind-the-scenes negotiations were stumbling over demands by President Elias Hrawi for a big say in the formation of the cabinet which Mr. Hariri was not ready to accept.

"The cabinet will not be formed until all the obstacles are removed. It is unlikely that it will be formed before next week," political sources said.

Speaker Nabih Berri, the third member of Lebanon's ruling tripartite, was not involved in the current dispute between Mr. Hrawi and Mr. Berri but might make his own demands on the composition of the cabinet once they reached an agreement.

More than a week after President Hrawi picked Mr. Hariri for a third term as prime minister, Beirut newspapers predicted a prolonged cabinet crisis, likely forcing intervention by Syria, the real power broker in Lebanon.

The delay in forming the government comes after Mr. Hariri pledged to move rapidly against social and economic problems and to push forward his multi-billion dollar plan to rebuild Lebanon following the 1975-90 civil war.

Continued efforts by Mr. Hariri, a billionaire tycoon, are widely seen as indispensable for revitalising the war-shattered economy and encourag-

ing foreign investment.

The delay in forming the new cabinet — contrasts with Mr. Hariri's swift reappointment Oct. 24 after Mr. Hrawi had consulted with parliament for only two days.

By tradition in Lebanon, the president is a Maronite Catholic, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim and the parliament speaker a Shiite Muslim.

Reportedly, the current crisis arises as the three leaders try to get allies from faiths other than their own into the half-Christian, half-Muslim cabinet, which is expected to have 30 members, like the last one.

The differences between Mr. Hariri, Mr. Hrawi and Mr. Berri threaten to undermine the three leaders' coalition, forged during August and September elections to elect Muslim fundamentalists from the new legislature.

The independent daily Al Nahar said Friday that the cabinet crisis could drag on for a long time, and the pro-Syrian leftist daily Al Safir said the crisis could lead to the breakup of the "triangular" alliance of Mr. Hrawi, Mr. Hariri and Mr. Berri.

"The country is headed toward a (political) vacuum or probably toward a government crisis that might lead to a realignment of forces," the paper said.

An additional signal that the formation of the new cabinet is not imminent came in Mr. Hariri's instructions Thursday to members of his caretaker cabinet to tend to their ministerial affairs until a new cabinet is set up.

In remarks published Friday, Mr. Hariri played down the hurdles to forming a new cabinet.

"There's no need for haste. If there's a delay in the formation, this doesn't mean a problem or a crisis," he was quoted by the Arabic daily Al Hayat as saying.

U.K. Catholics favour married priests

LONDON (R) — Two out of three British Roman Catholics are in favour of married priests, according to a poll published in the Catholic Herald on Friday. Parishioners polled by the weekly also said the centuries-old celibacy rule will be changed. Britain's minority Roman Catholic church has been shaken by scandal. A Scottish bishop, Roderick Wright, resigned after he eloped with a divorcee. It was also revealed he had a teenage son from another lover. A Catholic Herald Poll 20 years ago showed only one in three parishioners in favour of ending celibacy. That trend has now been sharply reversed with 69 per cent now backing married priests.

Panda tumour removed in China

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese surgeons have performed a tumour operation on a 16-year-old panda and successfully removed a 650-gramme growth, the official Xinhua news agency reported Friday. Doctors in central Henan province carried out the hour-long operation on panda Shunshun's left arm in a local tumour hospital on Oct. 9. "Soon after the operation, Shunshun started to chew her usual food — fresh bamboo leaves — and did not show any unusual post-operation signs," the news agency said. Pandas are native only to China and there are believed to be less than 1,000 left in the wild.

Officials search for tailed tribe

JAKARTA (AFP) — Officials are searching for a tribe of tailed people who have been sighted by locals living in a remote part of an island off the coast of Irian Jaya, a report said Friday. "We received information about them (the tribe) from people living near the tribe," Rangan Wuwung, a Ministry of Social Services official in the area, was quoted as saying in the Jakarta Post. The tribe of people with tails reportedly roam an isolated district on Serui island, off the northern coast of Irian Jaya, Indonesia's easternmost province. Mr. Wuwung said it took a seven hour boat ride and several days of walking to reach the area. "We're still trying. We haven't succeeded because it's very hard to find them," he said.

'Bagpipes not a weapon of war'

LONDON (AFP) — A London court on Thursday rejected a defendant's claim that bagpipes are a weapon of war and not a musical instrument, and fined him for repeatedly playing them in a public park. David Brookes was fined £45 (\$70) for breaching Hampstead Heath's bylaws three times in May this year by playing a musical instrument without consent from the local authority. Mr. Brookes, 49, who has played his pipes regularly on the Heath for over 20 years, claimed that he had not breached the bylaws because, according to a 1746 ruling, bagpipes are a weapon of war, not a musical instrument. His defence lawyer George Fairburn argued that "in the time of bonny Prince Charlie a man was found guilty of treason and hung, drawn and quartered because a court found his bagpipes were a weapon of war."

Police disperse Bahrain protest

MANAMA (AFP) — Police dispersed a small demonstration Thursday night in the centre of the Bahraini capital Manama, as security was stepped up across the city following opposition calls for a wave of protests, witnesses said.

"Around 20 people gathered in front of the American hospital in Manama before being dispersed by police who intervened immediately," said one inhabitant of the area, adding that there were no clashes.

Other residents said a tight security blanket had been thrown around Shiite Muslim suburbs of Manama and around Sitra, south of the capital.

Three Shiite opposition leaders had called on Bahrainis to gather on Thursday at the graves of "martyrs" killed by the security services during a wave of anti-government unrest.

They had also called on schoolchildren to boycott lessons on Wednesday, and urged the population to gather at the country's mosques on Friday.

However, one inhabitant said the call to protest against the authorities had "only been observed in a very limited way."

"Apart from the small

demonstration, outside a Manama hospital, small groups gathered on Wednesday and Thursday, notably outside mosques and cemeteries," he said, adding that the gathering had been closely monitored by police who had not intervened.

Teachers told AFP that lessons at schools had passed off "normally" on Wednesday without interruption.

"Just a few pupils stayed at home on Wednesday as their parents preferred to keep them at home to guard against any eventuality," said a teacher at a foreign school in Manama.

Meanwhile, the exiled Islamic Liberation Front of Bahrain on Thursday called on Bahrainis to "observe 10 minutes silence on Saturday in protest against the pursuit of a policy of violence by the authorities."

The front called the protest to show solidarity with three people sentenced to death for the murder of seven Bangladeshis in a restaurant fire in July.

The human rights groups Amnesty International and human rights watch on Thursday called for the Bahraini authorities to grant reprieves to the three men.

Iraq renews call for end to U.N. sanctions

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq called on Friday for the immediate lifting of U.N. trade sanctions imposed for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Speaking ahead of a regular Security Council review of the curbs, Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan accused the United States of delaying the end of the embargo and the implementation of an "oil-for-food" deal signed by Iraq and the United Nations.

"The international community is requested to end the embargo and implement paragraph 22 of the U.N. Resolution 687 allowing Iraq to export its oil subject to Baghdad meeting U.N. conditions" and put the memorandum of understanding (oil deal) into effect," Mr. Ramadan said.

"America is using the embargo (against Iraq) as an unhumane tool to undermine it in order to guarantee its own interests," Mr. Ramadan said at the opening of a trade fair in Baghdad.

The U.N. curbs include a ban on Iraqi oil exports and on all imports but food, medicine and other humanitarian items, for which Baghdad has little money to pay.

A key condition for any easing of sanctions is a report by the U.N. Special Commission in charge of eliminating Iraq's weapons

of mass destruction that Baghdad has disclosed full details of its nuclear, chemical, biological and ballistic missile programmes and that forbidden weapons and facilities have been scrapped.

"Despite the full cooperation Iraq extends to U.N. inspectors and Iraq's implementation of the Security Council resolutions, America and Britain are continuing their attempts to maintain the embargo," he said.

Under the oil deal Iraq signed with the U.N. in May, Baghdad is permitted to sell \$2 billion worth of oil in six months to buy food and medicine. The pact has been stalled since September when Baghdad sent troops to help a Kurdish faction to fight against a rival group.

"America is impeding the implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed by Iraq and the United Nations," Mr. Ramadan said.

Sixteen countries and 51 multinational companies are attending the 15-day fair. Iraq hopes to sign trade deals with companies even though these depend on the stalled oil agreement.

Mr. Ramadan said Iraq would give countries and companies which stood by his country during the years of sanctions "preferential treatment" when signing deals.

Israel to be Palestine

Ross ex accord

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The Palestinians (finalising an Israeli troop pull-out from Hebron and signed during a 14 economic Cairo, Israeli ra-

But an Egyptian ministry official said two sides were apart on a Hebron signing ceremony was unlikely. The Israeli American sources, said U.S. State Department was expected signing ceremony. Israel was pulled out of 80% of Hebron in Prime Minister Netanyahu demanding guarantees for Jewish settlers from West Bank town.

In contrast, Palestinian charged San Israel's right-wing movement was held according to previous Labour commitments under previous Labour government.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Committee, a meeting over the city, accused

KDP accords

DUBAI (AFP) — Kurdistan Party (KDP) raised objections to points of the agreement between rival Kurdish forces. It said it would cease fire in the KDP.

Barzani said it would release two days in Ankara with the KDP (PUK) was issued had been KDP leaders.

"The police was due to observations of the situation," the KDP statement. "The PUK did not respond and issued the ceasefire in the KDP."

However, the 22 points of agreement drawn Wednesday that were also British and Turkish as well as natives of northern Iraq. "Deciding issues shall return of our and the result of the issues, the agreement, the alliance, our party, the KDP said."

It listed the agreed upon ceasefire and cessation of talks.